No 13 April 1984

IMAGINE™

Adventure Games Magazine

£1.00

INSIDE:

Will Our Thirteenth Issue Leave You

SCREAMING?

A special edition, celebrating the work of the Master of Gothic horror:

H. P. LOVECRAFT

plus

Part 4 of our **PRIZE COMPETITION**, fiction, news & reviews, role-playing advice, cartoons and more!

Enclosed: a brief encounter for the **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** game

One mistake and you're just one more piece of debris

Knight Hawks from TSR

Space is big, cold and hostile. There is nobody to run to for help. You are on your own. Only the very best can survive in TSR's Knight Hawks science fiction game. Are you up to the challenge? The pilot of the sleek fighter, the gunner in a space dreadnought, the navigator on the jump to Prenglar. All these challenges and more are available with this expansion kit for the STAR FRONTIERS™ game.
(And Knight Hawks is also a great game in its own right).

The game features:

* New space skills.
* Detailed aspects of interstellar travel, financing and constructing a star ship, etc.
* Plenty of new rules material including traditional science fiction elements.

Ask your games retailer for details or contact

TSR UK Limited,
The Mill, Rathmore Road,
Cambridge CB1 4AD
Telephone 0223 212517

STAR FRONTIERS is a trade mark owned by TSR Hobbies Inc.

IMAGINE™

No 13 April 1984

Published by TSR UK Ltd

Publisher ..... **Don Turnbull**
Editor ..... Keith Thomson
Assistant Editor ..... Paul Cockburn
Editorial Assistant ..... Kim Daniel
Features Assistant ..... Mike Brunton
Art ..... Phil Kaye
News ..... Doug Cowie
Computing ..... Mike Costello

This month's contributing artists:

Paul Ruiz, Dave Carson, Rebecca, Stephen Jones, Anne Hamill, Ian Williamson

Cover: **TO Spec 12**, by Terry Oakes

Editorial

Horror and the Otherworldly seem to hold a strange fascination for people — a need to be terrified by the weird and supernatural which they cannot find in the world around them. When something sufficiently frightening doesn't exist, we make it up. Lacking the medieval superstitions of our forebears, who knew that more than the night existed outside their doors, we apparently need to feel threatened by creatures of pure imagination.

As 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder', so 'horror is in the mind'. The best horror stories always cause unease, a feeling that something is watching, lurking behind the curtains, hiding in the shadows, waiting for that moment of relaxation, when your guard drops and you are vulnerable.

Of course, there never is anythi

Mike Brunton

Contents

Put a Little TERROR into Your Life, by Steve Norledge
An analysis of the CALL OF CTHULHU game system 2
Forthcoming Events 6
The Mirror of Nitocris, by Brian Lumley
Lovecraft-style fiction: NOT recommended bedtime reading! 7
Howard Phillips Lovecraft, by Paul Cockburn
An appreciation of the master of gothic horror 11
Illuminations, the latest news from the world of gaming 12
Darklaw, by Simon Redgrave
Brief encounter for readers wishing to try a taste of terror 15
The Imagination Machine, by Mike Costello,
News and reviews on micros and software for gamers 20
The Philosophers Stone, by Anne Hamill
Part 4 of our prize competition, and results of Part 3 22
Solstice at Castle Falkens, by Chris Felton
So you thought **CoC** was the only horror-stricken RPG 27
PAN, the magazine within a magazine
Turnbull Talking 31
Clubs, Fanzines and Complimentary Tickets 32
Dialog, by Lew Pulsipher 32
Tavern Talk, by Pete Tamlyn 33
Rubic of Moggedon 34
New! Combat Results Table, Saving Throw Matrix and a revised XP Award Table for the AD&D™ game,
by Gary Gygax and Len Lakofka 35
Notices — Recent game releases examined by independent reviewers 38
Stirge Corner, by Roger Musson
A guide for the inexperienced player 41
Nic Novice, the excitement continues with 'The Treasure' 42
Dispel Confusion, RPG rules questions answered 43
Book Review, by Dave Pringle 45
The Sword of Alabron, by Ian Williamson 46

Next Issue

Explore Alternative Futures in the World of

LUTHER ARKWRIGHT

Agent of W.O.T.A.N.

Featuring:
*An EPIC scenario for the **Traveller** Science Fiction RPG, with notes for conversion to the **STAR FRONTIERS®** game, and fantasy RPGs.*
*Can you prevent the Disruptors from activating the **Fire Opal of Set?***

Plus:
***Featherquest**, the story of a man and a dream – original fiction from Neil Gaiman*
All our regular features, news and reviews, and an article on the use of campaign diaries in FRP games

And a prize competition – win a copy of the amazing comic art book, The Adventures of Luther Arkwright, by Bryan Talbot.

All this in IMAGINE magazine, #14. Just £1

IMAGINE™ magazine is published monthly by TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Road, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD. Telephone: (0223) 212517. Telex: 818761.

IMAGINE magazine is available from all good hobby shops and newsagents. It is distributed through the newstrade by Seymour Press Ltd, 334 Brixton Road, LONDON SW9 7AG. It is also available direct from the publisher by individual subscription. The subscription rate is £12 for twelve issues.

Back issues of IMAGINE magazine, where still available, can be bought directly from the publisher for the price of £1.00 (plus 50p postage and packing). Payment must accompany all orders. If one or more issues in an order are out of print, a credit note will be substituted which may be exchanged for cash or merchandise from the publisher.

The issue of expiration for each subscription will be printed on the subscriber's mailing label. Changes of address must be notified to the publisher at least 30 days before the effective change to ensure uninterrupted delivery.

All material published in IMAGINE magazine becomes the exclusive property of the publisher prior to publication, unless special arrangements are made to the contrary in writing.

IMAGINE magazine welcomes unsolicited submissions of written material and artwork at all times. However, no submissions will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope of sufficient size and postage. Under no circumstances will the publisher accept responsibility for any such submissions. Published material will be paid for.

IMAGINE is a trade mark owned by TSR UK Ltd. All rights on the publication of this magazine are reserved, and nothing may be reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of the publisher.

Copyright ©1984 by TSR UK Ltd.

Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those held by the publisher.

IMAGINE magazine gratefully acknowledges the support offered by its sister publication, DRAGON® magazine, published by TSR Inc, PO Box 756, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin 53147, USA. Articles appearing in IMAGINE magazine may have appeared previously in that publication.

PUT A LITTLE TERROR

"We were on the track ahead as the nightmare plastic column of fetid black iridescence oozed tightly onwards through its fifteen-foot sinus, gathering unholy speed and driving before it a spiral, rethickening cloud of the pallid abyss vapour. It was a terrible indescribable thing, vaster than any subway train – a shapeless congeries of protoplasmic bubbles, faintly self-luminous, and with myriads of temporary eyes forming and unforming as pustules of greenish light all over the tunnel-filling front that bore down upon us, crushing the frantic penguin and slithering over the glistening floor that it and its kind had swept so evilly free of all litter. Still came the eldritch, mocking cry – 'Tekeli-li! Tekeli-li!'."

At the Mountains of Madness
by H P Lovecraft

Eeek! Unmistakeably the style of one of the greatest Gothic Horror authors of this century, Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

Popular since his work was first printed in the pulp SF magazines of the 1920s, Lovecraft now has a cult following of people eager to read tales of his greatest creation: the Cthulhu Mythos.

Simply put, the Cthulhu Mythos is a complex collection of terrible alien entities and creatures accompanied by a web-like mythology that forms the core of Lovecraft's horror stories. This, in Lovecraft's own words, was *'Based upon the fundamental lore and legend that this world was inhabited at one time by another race who, by practising Black magic, lost their foothold and were expelled, yet live on outside, ever ready to take possession of the Earth again'.*

It is this eternal threat to the sanctity of mankind that is present in one form or another in much of Lovecraft's work, as the insidious alien horrors subtly permeate society in attempts to so disrupt it that they might return to Earth and rule again over their rightful domain. Only a few brave men and women, stout of heart and mind, stand against them; the unlikely 'heroes' of Lovecraft's tales.

Sounds as though this would make a good basis for a role-playing game, don't you think? Well, it does!

Although a lot of Lovecraft's work would not transpose directly into the ideal heroic adventure scenario, much of it does, and the Mythos and atmosphere that exude from his horrific tales are certainly conducive to creating a good RPG. Imagine the struggle as the players strive against the unfathomable, unnameable Evils in (vain?) attempts to save the world from — or at least delay — ultimate desolation! A somewhat different kettle of fish from orc bashing in the nearest glorified sewer, no?

Indeed, a game based on Lovecraft's books presents totally different challenges from all other RPGs. For example, instead of the sickeningly handsome and brawny warriors found in virtually all Fantasy campaigns, Lovecraftian heroes are typically academic intellectuals who only come across the devious works of these Primaeval Horrors and their worshippers through their studies. Having discovered that something terrible is going on, invariably the heroes become obsessed with trying to thwart the Evils that await without, leading to a final climactic confrontation — which all too often ends with the forces of evil prevailing... Yet there is always the hope, perhaps merely a hope, that Good will succeed.

Obviously, an adventure following this sort of pattern, as opposed to dungeon-bashing, requires a great deal of care and imagination from GM and players alike; the players will have the unenviable task of having to work out what on earth is going on, while the GM has to sustain high levels of suspense and interest in the plot and maintain a careful balance, making the adventure challenging yet still possible to solve. A far from easy task! But if running such a game is difficult, then the rewards of doing so successfully will be all the greater — far more satisfying than refereeing combat after combat in a hack & slay dungeon.

Of course, this type of game may not appeal to everyone initially; the prospect of having your character spend hours searching musty old libraries and records offices for that vital clue which will make sense of the morass of information they have already discovered, might not compare with running another goblin through. However, in practice this takes little real time and is far from tedious. Like the best detective stories, trying to piece together the information is good fun — if only because of the dire consequences of coming to an incorrect conclusion! And, of course, it gives the merest inkling of the terror to come during the ultimate confrontation with unthinkable evil.

The confrontations themselves are something different! The Eldritch Terrors that frequent Lovecraft's work are so mind-blowingly Evil that even to see them is to court insanity. They are beings of such perverse power that mortals cannot hope to defeat them in simple combat — no, much more cunning is required of players in this game. Thus, it is highly unlikely that players will rush into a confrontation with Evil — to do so is sheer foolhardiness and likely to produce one inevitable result, — death of the slow and painful variety! However, overcoming the Eldritch Horrors is not an insurmountable task: with the human capacity for cunning and trickery they will frequently succeed, though the cost of success may well be high. However, such confrontations should be experienced by any true role-player; with sympathetic GMing these situations have a flavour and atmosphere all their own. For example, investigating a deserted and haunted house can be a truly scary adventure — just like reading one of Lovecraft's books, in fact!

Lovecraft's Evils and their terrible plots are not the only challenges to be faced by players in games like this. Most of Lovecraft's works are set in his own time, the 1920s, and are usually located in the North Eastern area of the USA. The imaginative GM thus has an almost limitless source of other challenges to be thrown at the players.

For a start, this is the time of the great American Prohibition, which resulted in gang warfare between the liquor bootleggers. Al Capone and his kin are at the height of their powers and there is no reason why players shouldn't learn to dread visits from smartly dressed Sicilian gentlemen carrying violin cases...

Racialism also rears its ugly head: this is the time when the Ku Klux Klan is at the height of its powers. Perhaps this evil corruption of society has even more sinister roots — Cthulhu and his minions might have connections with such groups.

On top of this, the players must also try to act within the bounds of the Law and Order they profess to defend. Despite the efforts of Capone and Luciano, the Police are still a force to be reckoned with and won't take kindly to people who shoot a little old man because 'he was about to summon a Demon'... Murder doesn't go unpunished as it typically does in your average FRP game.

The rewards of defeating the minions of Cthulhu may be great for the soul, but unfortunately they won't pay the bills! Money (or rather the lack of it) will certainly be a major source of concern, especially as adventuring tends to get in the way of holding down a steady job. Life isn't easy for a defender of mankind, but is infinitely rewarding for players and GM alike when you play in a Lovecraft campaign.

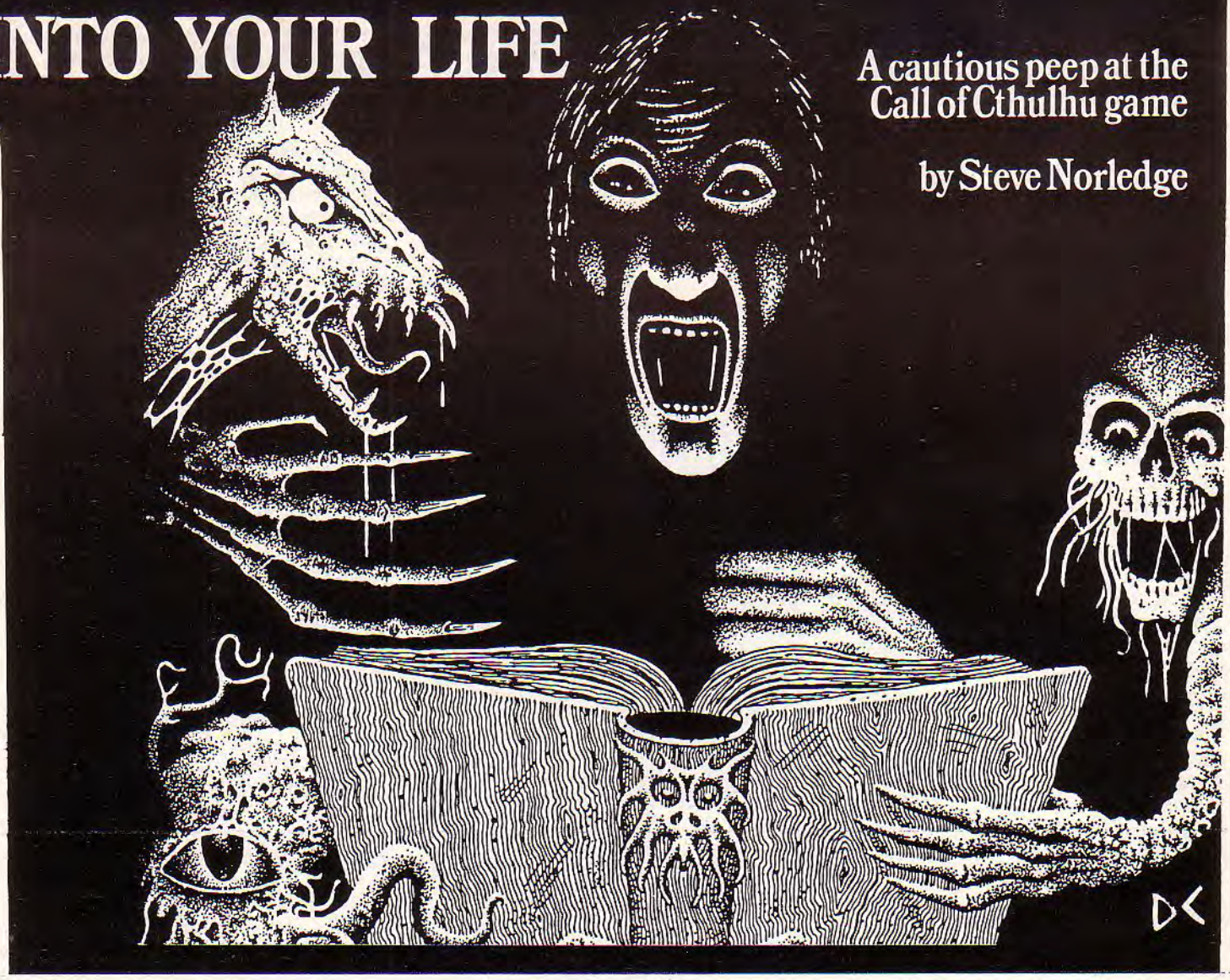
Unfortunately, constructing a game that will adequately recreate that Lovecraftian feel is a challenge. It's all too easy to end up with **RuneQuest** or the **AD&D**™ game under a different name. If the unique flavour and atmosphere of the Lovecraftian era is to be captured, then the fundamental elements of the Cthulhu mythos must be translated into gaming terms.

The first problem is to recreate the background Lovecraft chose for his stories — America (and to a lesser extent, the rest of the world as well) in the 1920s.

INTO YOUR LIFE

A cautious peep at the Call of Cthulhu game

by Steve Norledge



Fairly obviously, this has a large number of inherent differences from your usual fantasy or SF world. It is a world inhabited by real people doing mundane things by comparison with the events of Middle Earth or Barsoom. However, this does not mean that it is an uninteresting setting — as already suggested, the 1920s were colourful times. However, if the GM doesn't have the facts right, the background can all too easily disintegrate.

Research should be done so that mistakes aren't made about the history of the period, the technology that was around and the culture and attitudes of the peoples. All it takes is for one of the players to point out that such an item hadn't been invented, or that someone wasn't yet born at this time — niggling little things — and the background as a whole becomes shallow and false to the players. Hardly the ideal situation for role-playing, eh? The greater the depth of your researches, the more real the world will seem and the better the players will be able to get the feel of the game. Your effort in this may also benefit the game in that it will inspire myriads of adventures. Reading about the great people of the time might provoke scenarios centred around celebrities. There is undoubtedly a lot more to real people than there is to Conan or Tarl Cabot, if only for the reason that we know more about them.

The more you think about it, the more attractive the 'mundane' world becomes as the setting for your adventure gaming!

If the setting is hard to handle, the Cthulhu mythos is doubly so. Lovecraft portrays the members of the mythos as terrible supernatural alien beings, ranging widely in both powers and status within the mythos, from the ultimately unthinkable Outer Gods, such as Nyarlathotep the crawling Chaos, and Azathoth the Daemon Sultan, through those most ghastly of Eldritch horrors, the Great Old Ones (including Cthulhu himself) to the lowly but nevertheless foul Ghouls, that exist purely to do their masters' bidding. Few of these are to be found on Earth today (which is just as well...) although some of the Great Old Ones appear to be imprisoned in remote regions, awaiting release when either the stars are 'right' or when their insane followers gain the power over magic required to release them. The mad Arab, Abd Alhazred, prophesied that sometime they shall be freed. He wrote:

In His House at R'lyeh Dead Cthulhu waits dreaming, yet He shall rise and His Kingdom shall cover the Earth.

For the most part, though, the Eldritch Creatures dwell elsewhere, beyond our world and in other (and, indeed, between) planes of existence. They only visit this world when some insane warlock has discovered how to summon them here in the hope of furthering his power. All too often the only reward for such action is, you guessed it, death.

These beings are of such diabolically unnatural visage that the human mind is unable and unwilling to comprehend them. Thus, even the merest glimpse of such Horrors is enough to drive the most mentally stable person insane. This factor, combined with the Eldritch Creatures' hideously unnatural strength and resistance to the insignificant weapons of mortals, make them exceptionally hard to overcome physically. This certainly isn't the game for you if you're into 'hack and slay', such tactics typically result in painful death!

The alien beings must also be accompanied by a profusion of legends, practitioners of the black arts, spells, alien artifacts and great tomes of hideous lore. The most famous of these that Lovecraft created was the Necronomicon written by the Mad Arab, Abd Alhazred. Lovecraft used this to such great effect that even today people believe that it really exists...

All this creates the problem that again, a great deal of research is required to make the Mythos seem consistent and believable. The aims and attitudes of these creatures must be known, as well as some detail as to what they look like. The Cults must seem logical and the legends and spells must fit in as well. But given all this, you have the recipe for a superb game.

A role-playing game based on the works of H P Lovecraft also requires something rather special in the way of rules systems and background information.

That something is certainly provided in **Call of Cthulhu**, a role-playing game based on the works of H P Lovecraft produced by the Chaosium.

It comes in a nicely illustrated box and includes a 96 page rule book, a 32 page Source book about the 1920s, an introduction to role-playing (Chaosium's Basic Role-Playing system), a world map, character silhouettes and a pad of character sheets, and of course the ubiquitous polyhedral dice. All the components are of good quality, but you expect that of any game costing £18.95. How, then, does CoC cope with the problems of the setting and the Cthulhu Mythos that I have outlined above?

The problem of getting background information is indeed awkward — and this point is emphasised by the CoC set. Although there is a lot of relevant information in both the rule book and the Source book, there is definite room for improvement (or expansion), especially where the Source book is concerned. Even a cursory glance at the Source book will reveal where it fails. It is a collection of odds and ends: tables and scraps of information that the designers couldn't fit into the main rule book. There are some very useful sections: the price list and historical notes are invaluable. However, these are interspersed with some really worthless stuff. There are a large number of maps depicting archeological sites which are so badly drawn as to be indecipherable — and how often will the GM need to know the distance between New Orleans and Valparaiso?! Even if he did, an atlas would supply the answer. The different sections are also thrown together rather haphazardly, so finding a particular section takes time until you are used to the book.

Of far more use for setting the scene for the 1920s is the superb main rule book. The information is far less 'bitty' and its more general nature makes it easier to assimilate and use. It is also helpful as a guide to recognising what extra research must be done by the GM.

Anything the CoC set might lack with respect to the campaign background is more than made up for by the designer's brilliant treatment of the Cthulhu Mythos. Every aspect of the Mythos: the Outer Gods, the Great Old Ones, the minor races, the legends and spells, all are detailed exactingly and accurately. And what is even more refreshing is the fact that everything is included for the benefit of the game rather than to make it unnecessarily complicated or to cover up for unimaginative Games Masters, which is often the case with other role-playing games.

Each of the Eldritch Horrors is described in depth, often using quotes from original Lovecraft, and there are also useful references to the Creatures' contact with human cults as well as the usual combat stats. This is augmented by an excellent section describing the history and constitution of the Mythos as a whole which, as much as anything, will help the GM come up with exciting plots for scenarios. To my mind, this is probably the best worked-out collection of adversaries that a player could wish to meet

(avoid?)! Not only is each Horror richly developed, but the whole thing is so well knitted together, so logical and consistent in every respect, that the section almost makes you wonder whether Cthulhu & Co really are out there... and if so, how did Sandy Petersen (the designer) get such accurate information?

The horrific nature of the Diabolic Terrors and the mind-crushing effect they have on the human brain is very well handled in the section entitled 'Insanity'. This uses the simple characteristic called Sanity (SAN) which represents the individual's ability to resist the mental trauma that result from encountering a Primaeval Horror or witnessing a diabolical deed. Each time the character is exposed to supernatural horror of some sort there is a chance that some of this SAN will be lost, and if a large amount is lost then the character may well go insane and flee gibbering to the nearest exit! This is something that occurs quite frequently in Lovecraft's tales.

Magic is similarly well handled — the spells being typically of the Summoning and Binding type appropriate to the Lovecraftian background. As in Lovecraft's books these spells are tricky and dangerous to use. Only a few examples of artifacts are given but it is suggested that most of these should be of the Summoning type.

The CoC set also emphasises the non 'hack & slay' style of the game, indeed the designer states that this attitude should be discouraged by the GM. Combat is lethal, not just for the reason that there is no armour available — a player will die quickly if mistaking CoC for just another RPG! This is doubly true where the Eldritch Horrors are concerned, they are terribly strong and if the players decide to make a head-on attack, only one result is likely — Cthulhu 1 Players 0.

This may sound as if CoC is impossible to play — you roll a character who gets killed immediately. Well, this is certainly possible if the player treats the game like any other — CoC requires a lot of trickery and cunning as well as careful thought, and is therefore a lot more stimulating and rewarding than other RPGs.

Call of Cthulhu is certainly an excellent way of simulating the Gothic Horror stories of H P Lovecraft and, in my opinion, is the best commercially available game so far produced.

Still, no matter how good CoC is, it is far from the be-all and end-all as far as using the Cthulhu Mythos goes. This is because the Mythos is like a Pantheon of Gods and can thus be adapted for use in virtually all campaigns, from fantasy to SF. For example, attempts have already been made to adapt the Mythos to both **AD&D** and **RuneQuest** games (although I would not say that either attempt was particularly successful...). With a little research into Lovecraft's books any competent GM will be able to recreate the atmosphere inherent in the Cthulhu Mythos.

There are drawbacks of backgrounds other than the 1920s when the Cthulhu Mythos is introduced. One of these must be the loss of impact that the Mythos has: in the 1920s there is a stark and striking contrast between the warm, safe human world and the Diabolical Evil that is without, which makes the Horrors seem even more terrible and Magic even more weird and dangerous. This contrast will be lost to a large extent when the Primaeval terrors have to compete with Fantasy monsters and magic or fantastic technology and space travel, and the Cthulhu Mythos becomes a little less shocking than it deserves to be.

There are, however, a large variety of games set in similar times to CoC which would easily benefit from the occasional use of the Cthulhu Mythos. The **GANGBUSTERS™, Gangsters, Daredevils** and **BOOT HILL®** games spring to mind immediately, and the Cthulhu Mythos could give players in these games a nasty surprise (so watch out!). The Cthulhu Mythos is very flexible in its use, but it must always be used with caution on the GM's part — or you could quickly run out of live characters!

I hope this has whetted your appetite either to try Call of Cthulhu or to construct your own version of Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos — I believe that it adds a whole new dimension to role-playing, the atmosphere that can be generated is better than that of any other game I have ever experienced. And besides, it will let your players know the true meaning of —

TERROR!

Steve Norledge

PEOPLE LIKE US SHOP AT ...

FORBIDDEN PLANET

- Now Central London's largest Fantasy Role-Playing Games stockist
- Dungeons & Dragons, Fantasy, S.F. & Super-hero Role-Playing Games, S.F. and Fantasy Boxed Games, etc.
- All new US import and British S.F., Fantasy and Horror Books, Film & TV and Comic-related Books and Magazines
- Fantasy and Comic Art Posters, Prints and Portfolios
- Star Wars Trilogy, Star Trek and Dr. Who Books and Merchandise

23 DENMARK ST., LONDON WC2H 8NA, ENGLAND. TEL.: 01-836 4179

Warriors, Thieves, Paladins and Wizards unite!

Subscribe now to

IMAGINE™

adventure games magazine

Complete role-playing game adventure in every issue!

12 Months Subscription Rates:

UK & Ireland — £12 (post free delivery)
USA (AIR) — $42 USA (SURFACE) — $30
EUROPE (AIR) — £21 Elsewhere — £25

Please make your cheque or postal order (no cash or international money orders accepted) payable to TSR UK Ltd and send it to us at:
IMAGINE magazine subscriptions, The Mill, Rathmore Road, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD.

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

.....

POST CODE IXIII

CLASSIFIED ADS

IMAGINE magazine offers special rates to those interested in taking out classified advertisements. These cost just 10p per word or £3.00 per column centimetre (pre-payment required).

If you want to advertise in IMAGINE magazine write to:

IMAGINE magazine (classified)
The Mill, Rathmore Road,
CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD.

SPS offers you a large range of (un)painted fantasy figures, 18 armies, siege equipment, diorama pieces, etc, at competitive prices.

Send 50p for illustrated catalogue or £1 for catalogue/painted sample to: 113 Chester Road, Macclesfield.

SOUTHAMPTON'S Centre for Games. All the latest games stocked from TSR, Games Workshop, Avalon Hill and many others. Also Citadel and Minifigs stocked.

PASTIMES II, East Street Centre, Southampton. Tel: 0703-21789.

Full TUNNELS & TROLLS set in first-class condition. First reasonable offer. Contact Sam Morgan, 5 Gilston Road, Pontcanna, CARDIFF CF1 9JS. Tel: Cardiff 25421.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

First on the agenda for April is TSR's own **GamesFair** at Reading University. This will take place from **12 noon on Friday 6th until 6.00pm on Sunday 8th April**, with a seminar led by Gary Gygax on Friday followed by a weekend filled with the usual attractions, including the Open Championship and Team Competition in the AD&D™ game. If you haven't already booked, it's too late! but watch out for full coverage in #15 of IMAGINE™ magazine.

Seacon takes place over Easter weekend **20 — 23 April** at the Brighton Metropole. Guests are billed as Roger Zelazny and Christopher Priest, among others, but contact organiser Pauline Morgan to check on details — 321 Sarehole Rd, Hall Green, Birmingham, B28 0AL. Tickets £10.

We have news of a small convention for **Morrow Project** fanatics over the weekend of **28/29 April** in Walsall. There will be a small fee of about £4, not including accommodation. Full details obtainable from Chris Harvey, Flying Buffalo, PO Box 100, Bath St, Walsall, W Midlands. Tel: 0922 28181

Tynecon II: The Mexicon will be in Newcastle from **25 to 28 May**, at the Royal Station Hotel, Newcastle upon Tyne. This convention will have a specific focus on written science fiction, with a single continuous programme, and, it is hoped by the organisers, a small, compact and friendly atmosphere. Attending membership is £5, accommodation costs from £13.25 per person. Contact Sue Williams, 19 Jesmond Dene Rd, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 3QT.

Finally, **Diplomacy** players: **Manorcon** will take place in The Manor House, Birmingham (not Bristol, as previously announced!) on **13-16 July**. There will be the usual Diplomacy Tournament, with the added advantage this year that if a team of eight books together it will cost £24 for the whole team instead of £4 each. There is a maximum of ten teams, so don't delay your booking! There is no D&D game arranged at time of writing, but we hope someone will volunteer to put that right. For more details or to offer your help, write to Nick Kinzett, 11 Daleway Rd, Green Lane, Coventry.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

THE "WARLORD" GAMES SHOP

We now stock

*** IRREGULAR MINIATURES SIEGE EQUIPMENT**

*** CHRONICLE FIGURES**

*** PLATOON 20 FIGURES**

*** GALLIA 25mm BUILDINGS**

as well as

Dungeons & Dragons * Traveller and most RPGs and supplements. War Games * Science Fiction Games * Citadel Figures * Torchlight Fantasy Products * Rule Books * Davco Microtanks

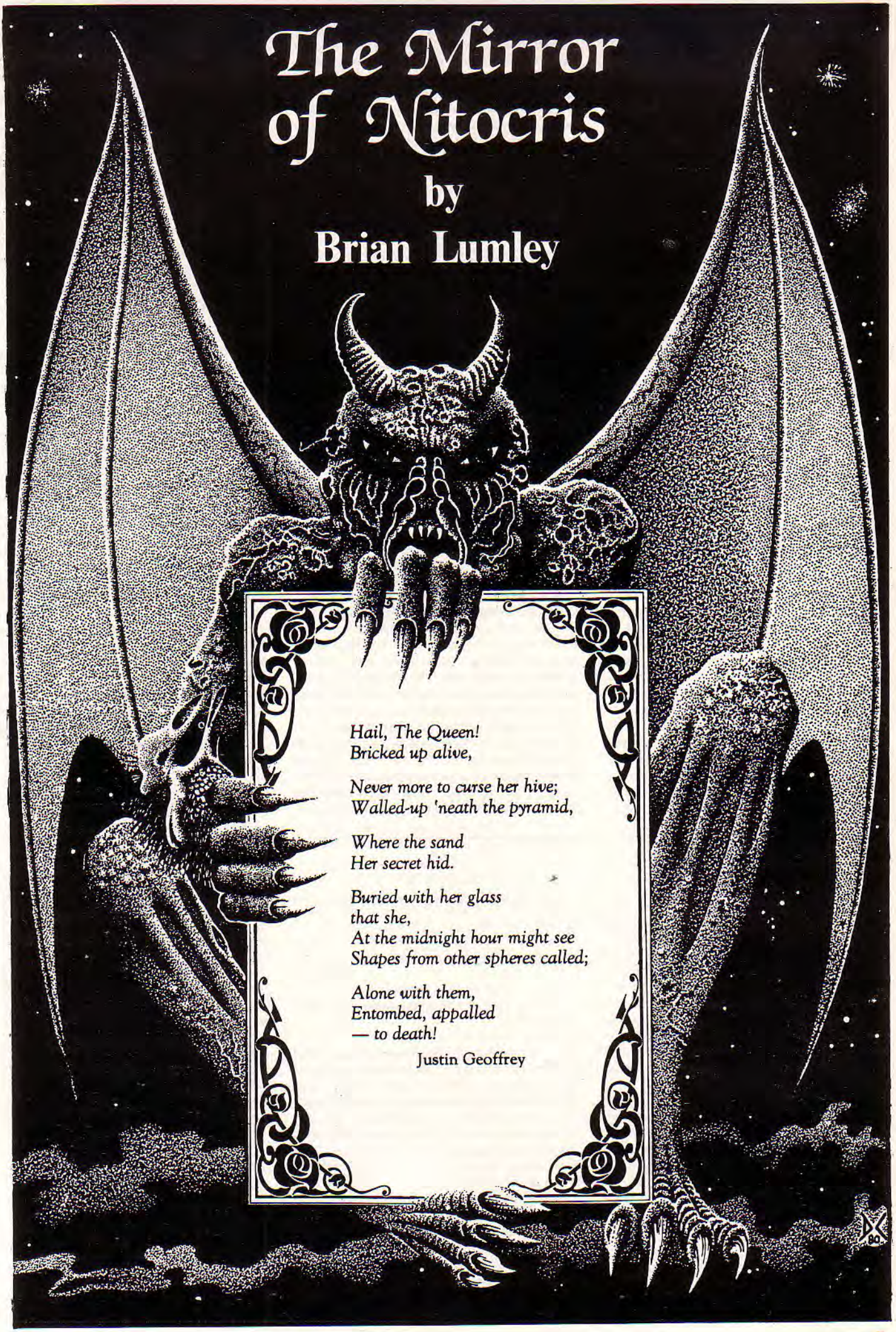
818 LONDON ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA
Tel. SOUTHEND 73308

Open 9.30-1.30 and 2.30-5.30 Closed Mondays

The Mirror of Nitocris

by

Brian Lumley



Hail, The Queen!
Bricked up alive,

Never more to curse her hive;
Walled-up 'neath the pyramid,

Where the sand
Her secret hid.

Buried with her glass
that she,
At the midnight hour might see
Shapes from other spheres called;

Alone with them,
Entombed, appalled
— to death!

Justin Geoffrey

Queen Nitocris' Mirror!

I had heard of it, of course (is there an occultist in the whole wide world who has not heard whispers, at least?) and had even read of it in Geoffrey's raving **People of the Monolith**. I knew that Alhazred had hinted of its powers in the forbidden **Necronomicon**, and that certain desert tribesmen still make a heathen sign which dates back untold centuries, when questioned too closely about the secrets of its origin.

So how was it that some fool auctioneer could stand up there and declare that this was Nitocris' Mirror? How dare he?

Yet the glass was from the collection of Bannister Brown-Farley — the explorer-archaeologist who, before his recent disappearance, was a recognized connoisseur of rare and obscure *objets d'art* — and its appearance was quite as *outré* as the appearance of an object with its alleged history ought to be. Moreover, was this not the self-same auctioneer, fool or otherwise, who had sold me Baron Kant's silver pistol only a year or two before? Not, mind you, that there was a single shred of evidence that the pistol, or the singular ammunition that came with it, had ever really belonged to the witch-hunting Baron; the ornately inscribed 'K' on the weapon's butt might stand for anything!

But, of course, I made my bid for the mirror, and for Bannister Brown-Farley's diary, and got them both. 'Sold to Mr, er, it is Mr de Marigny, isn't it, Sir? Thought so! — sold to Mr Henri-Laurent de Marigny, for....' For an abominable sum.

As I hurried home to the grey stone house which has been my home ever since my father sent me out of America, I could not help but wonder at the romantic fool in me which prompts me all too often to spend my pennies on such tomfooleries as these. Obviously an inherited idiosyncrasy which, along with my love of dark mysteries and obscure and antique wonders, was undoubtedly sealed into my personality as a permanent stamp of my world-famous father, the great New Orleans mystic Etienne-Laurent de Marigny.

Yet if the mirror really was once the possession of that awful sovereign — why! What a wonderful addition to my collection. I would hang the thing between my bookshelves, in company with Geoffrey, Poe, d'Erlette, and Prinn. For of course the legends and myths I had heard and read of were purely legends and myths, and nothing more; heaven forbid!

With my ever-increasing knowledge of night's stranger mysteries, I should have known better.

At home I sat for a long time, simply admiring the thing where it hung on my wall, studying the polished bronze frame with its beautifully moulded serpents and demons, ghouls and efreets; a page straight out of **The Arabian Knights**. And its surface was so perfect that even the late sunlight, striking through my windows, reflected no glare, but a pure beam of light which lit my study in a dream-engendering effulgence.

Nitocris' Mirror!

Nitocris. Now there was woman — or a monster, whichever way one chooses to think of her. A sixth-dynasty Queen who ruled her terror-stricken subjects with a will of supernatural iron from her seat at Gizeh — who once invited all her enemies to a feast in a temple below the Nile, and drowned them by opening the water-gates — whose mirror allowed her glimpses of the nether-pits where puffed Shoggoths and creatures of the Dark-Spheres carouse and sport in murderous lust and depravity.

Just suppose this was the real thing, the abhorred glass which they placed in her tomb before sealing her up alive; where could Brown-Farley have got hold of it?

Before I knew it, it was nine, and the light had grown so poor that the mirror was no more than a dull golden glow across the room in the shadow of the wall. I put on my study light, in order to read Brown-Farley's diary, and immediately — on picking up that small, flat book, which seemed to fall open automatically at a well-turned page — I became engrossed with the story which began to unfold. It appeared that the writer had been a niggardly man, for the pages were too closely written, in a crabbed hand, from margin to margin and top to bottom, with barely an eighth of an inch between lines. Or perhaps he had written these pages in haste, begrudging the seconds wasted in turning them and therefore determined to turn as few as possible?

> I shuddered strangely as I saw my face reflected in that glass. Just for a moment it had seemed to leer at me.

The very first word to catch my eyes was Nitocris!

The diary told of how Brown-Farley had heard it put about that a certain old Arab had been caught selling items of fabulous antiquity in the markets of Cairo. The man had been gaoled for refusing to tell the authorities whence the treasures had come. Yet every night in his cell he had called such evil things down upon the heads of his gaolers that eventually, in fear, they let him go. And he had blessed them in the name of Nitocris! Yet Abu Ben Reis was not one of those tribesmen who swore by her name — or against it! He was not a Gizeh man, nor one of Cairo's swarthy sons. His home tribe was a band of rovers wandering far to the east, beyond the great desert. Where, then, had he come into contact with Nitocris' name? Who had taught him her foul blessing — or where had he read of it? For through some kink of fate and breeding Abu Ben Reis had an uncommon knack with tongues and languages other than his own.

Just as thirty-five years earlier the inexplicable possessions of one Mohammad Hamad had attracted archaeologists of the calibre of Herbert E Winlock to the eventual discovery of the tomb of Thutmosis III's wives, so now did Abu Ben Reis's hinted knowledge of ancient burial grounds — and particularly the grave of the Queen of Elder Horror — suffice to send Brown-Farley to Cairo to seek his fortune.

Apparently he had not gone unadvised; the diary was full of bits and pieces of lore and legend in connection with the ancient Queen. Brown-Farley had faithfully copied from Wardle's **Notes on Nitocris**; and in particular the paragraph on her 'Magical Mirror':

'....handed down to their priests by the hideous gods of inner-Earth before the earliest civilisation of the Nile came into existence – a 'gateway' to unknown spheres and worlds of hellish horror in the shape of a mirror. Worshipped, it was, by the pre-Imer Nyahites in Ptathlia at the dawn of man's domination of the Earth, and eventually enshrined by Nephren-Ka in a black, windowless crypt on the banks of the Shibeli. Side-by-side, it lay, with the Shining Trapezohedron, and who can say what things might have been reflected in its depths? Even the Haunter of the Dark may have bubbled and blasphemed before it! Stolen, it remained hidden, unseen for centuries in the bat-shrouded labyrinths of Kith, before finally falling into Nitocris' foul clutches. Numerous the enemies she locked away, the mirror as sole company, full knowing that by the next morning the death-cell would be empty save for the sinister, polished glass on the wall. Numerous the vilely chuckled hints she gave of the features of those who leered at midnight from out of the bronze-barriered gate. But not even Nitocris herself was safe from the horrors locked in the mirror, and at the midnight hour she was wise enough to gaze but fleetingly upon it....'

The midnight hour! Why! It was ten already. Normally I would have been preparing for bed by this time; yet here I was, so involved now with the diary, that I did not give my bed a second thought. Better, perhaps, if I had....

I read on. Brown-Farley had eventually found Abu Ben Reis and had plied him with liquor and opium until finally he managed to do that which the proper authorities had found impossible. The old Arab gave up his secret — though the book hinted that this knowledge had not been all that easy to extract — and the next morning Brown-Farley had taken a little-used camel-track into the wastes beyond those pyramids wherein lay Nitocris' first burial place.

But from here on, there were great gaps in the writing — whole pages having been torn out or obliterated with thick, black strokes, as though the writer had realized that too much was revealed by what he had written — and there were rambling, incoherent paragraphs on the mysteries of death and the lands beyond the grave. Had I not known the explorer to have been such a fanatical antiquarian (his auctioned collection had

been unbelievably varied) and were I not aware that he had delved, prior to his search for Nitocris' second tomb, into many eldritch places and *outré* settings, I might have believed the writer mad from the contents of the diary's last pages. Even in this knowledge I half believed him mad anyway.

Obviously he had found the last resting place of Nitocris — the scribbled hints and suggestions were all too plain — but it seemed there had been nothing left worth removing. Abu Ben Reis had long since plundered all but the fabled mirror, and it was after Brown-Farley had taken that last item from the ghoul-haunted tomb that the first of his real troubles began. From what I could make out from the now garbled narrative, he had begun to develop a morbid fixation about the mirror, so that by night he kept it constantly draped.

But it was no good; before I could continue my perusal of the diary I had to get down my copy of Feery's **Notes on the Necronomicon**. There was something tickling me, there at the back of my mind, a memory, something I should know, something which Alhazred had known and written about. As I took Feery's book from my shelves I came face to face with the mirror. The light in my study was bright and the night was quite warm — with that oppressive heaviness of air which is ever the prelude to violent thunder-storms — yet I shuddered strangely as I saw my face reflected in that glass. Just for a moment it had seemed to leer at me.

I shrugged off the feeling of dread which immediately sprang up in my inner self, and started to look up the section concerning the mirror. A great clock chimed out the hour of eleven somewhere in the night and distant lightning lit up the sky to the west beyond the windows of my room. One hour to midnight.

Still, my study *is* the most disconcerting place. What with those eldritch books on my shelves, their aged leather and ivory spines dully agleam with the reflection of my study light; and the thing I use as a paper-weight, which has no parallel in any sane or ordered universe; and now with the mirror and the diary, I was rapidly developing an attack of the fidgets unlike any I had ever known before. It was a shock for me to realize that I was just a little uneasy!

I thumbed through Feery's often fanciful reconstruction of the Necronomicon until I found the relevant passage. The odds were that Feery had not altered this section at all; except, perhaps, to somewhat modernize the 'mad' Arab's old-world phraseology. Certainly it read like genuine Alhazred. Yes, there it was. And there, yet again, was that recurring hint of happenings at midnight:

'....for while the Surface of the Glass is still – even as the Crystal Pool of Yith-Shesh, even as the Lake of Hali when the Swimmers are not at the Frothing – and while its Gates are locked in the Hours of Day; yet, at the Witching Hour, One who knows – even One who guesses – may see in it all the Shades and Shapes of Night and the Pit, wearing the Visage of Those who saw before. And though the Glass may lie forgotten forever its Power may not die, and it should be known:

That is not dead which can forever lie,
And with strange aeons even death may die...'

For many moments I pondered that weird passage and the even weirder couplet which terminated it; and the minutes ticked by in a solemn silence hitherto outside my experience at The Aspens.

It was the distant chime of the half-hour which roused me from my reverie to continue my reading of Brown-Farley's diary. I purposefully put my face away from the mirror and leaned back in my chair, thoughtfully scanning the pages. But there were only one or two pages left to read, and as best I can remember the remainder of that disjointed narrative rambled on in this manner:

'10th. The nightmares on the London – all the way out from Alexandria to Liverpool – Christ knows I wish I'd flown. Not a single night's sleep. Appears the so-called 'legends' are not so fanciful as they seemed. Either that or my nerves are going! Possibly it's just the echo of a guilty conscience. If that old fool Abu hadn't been so damned close-mouthed – if he'd been satisfied with the opium and brandy instead of demanding money – and for what, I ask? There was no need for all that rough-stuff. And his poxy waffle about 'only wanting to protect' me. Rubbish! The old beggar'd long since cleaned the place out except for the mirror... That damned mirror! Have to get a grip on myself. What state must my nerves be in that I need to cover the thing up at night? Perhaps I've read too much from the Necronomicon! I wouldn't be the first fool to fall for that blasted book's hocus-pocus. Alhazred must have been as mad as Nitocris herself. Yet I suppose it's possible that it's all just imagination; there are drugs that can give the same effects, I'm sure. Could it be that the mirror has a hidden mechanism somewhere which releases some toxic powder or other at intervals? But what kind of mechanism would still be working so perfectly after the centuries that glass must have seen? And why always at midnight? Damned funny! And those dreams! There is one sure way to settle it, of course. I'll give it a few more days and if things get no better, well, we'll have to wait and see.

'13th. That's it, then. Tonight we'll have it out in the open. I mean, what good's a bloody psychiatrist who insists I'm perfectly well when I know I'm ill? That mirror's behind it all! "Face your problems," the fool said, "and if you do they cease to bother you." That's what I'll do then, tonight.

'13th. Night. There, I've sat myself down and it's eleven already. I'll wait 'til the stroke of midnight and then I'll take the cover off the glass and we'll see what we'll see. God! That a man like me should twitch like this! Who'd believe that only a few months ago I was as steady as a rock? And all for a bloody mirror. I'll have a smoke and a glass. That's better. Twenty minutes to go; good – soon be over now – p'raps tonight I'll get a bit of sleep for a change! The way the place goes suddenly quiet, as though the whole house were waiting for something to happen. I'm damned glad I sent Johnson home. It'd be no good to let him see me looking like this. What a God-awful state to get into! Five minutes to go. I'm tempted to take the cover off the mirror right now! There – midnight! Now we'll have it!'

And that was all there was!

I read it through again, slowly, wondering what there was in it which so alarmed me. And what a coincidence, I thought, reading that last line for the second time; for even as I did so the distant clock, muffled somewhere by the city's mists, chimed out the hour of twelve.

I thank God, now, that he sent that far-off chime to my ears. I am sure it could only have been an act of Providence which caused me to glance around upon hearing it. For that still glass — that mirror which is as quiet as the crystal pool of Yith-Shesh all the hours of day — was still no longer!

A thing, a bubbling blasphemous shape from lunacy's most hellish nightmare, was squeezing its flabby pulp out through the frame of the mirror into my room — and it wore a face where no face ever should have been! I do not recall moving — opening my desk drawer and snatching out that which lay within — yet it seems I must have done so. I remember only the deafening blasts of sound from the bucking, silver-plated revolver in my clammy hand; and above the rattle of sudden thunder, the whine of flying fragments and the shivering of glass as the hell-forged bronze frame buckled and leapt from the wall.

I remember, too, picking up the strangely twisted silver bullets from my Boukhara rug. And then I must have fainted.

The next morning I dropped the shattered fragments of the mirror's glass overboard from the rail of the Thames Ferry, and I melted down the frame to a bronze blob and buried it deep in my garden. I burned the diary, and scattered its ashes to the wind. Finally, I saw my doctor, and had him prescribe a sleeping-draft for me. I knew I was going to need it.

I have said that the thing had a face.

Indeed, atop the glistening, bubbling mass of that hell-dweller's bulk there was a face. A composite face of which the two halves did not agree! For one of them was the immaculately cruel visage of an ancient Queen of Egypt; and the other was easily recognizable — from photographs I had seen in the newspapers — as the now anguished and lunatic features of a certain lately vanished explorer!

Brian Lumley

COMMODORE User Monthly

The independent magazine for Commodore's small computers,
incorporating Vic Computing.

Please enter my annual subscription to Commodore User. I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to VIC COMPUTING LTD for...

☐ **£12.00 U.K.**
☐ **£18.00 EUROPE**
☐ **£IRL17.00 EIRE**
☐ **£32.00 Rest of world**

Now return this form with your cheque/postal order to:-

COMMODORE USER SUBSCRIPTIONS
BKT SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES
DOWGATE WORKS, DOUGLAS ROAD
TONBRIDGE, KENT TN9 2TS

Commodore User is published monthly commencing with the October 1983 issue. Unless you specify otherwise, your subscription will commence with the next issue.

NAME:
ADDRESS
POSTCODE
SIGNED: **DATED:**

THE CITADEL OF CHAOS IS IN EPSOM!

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™

Role-Playing Adventure Games

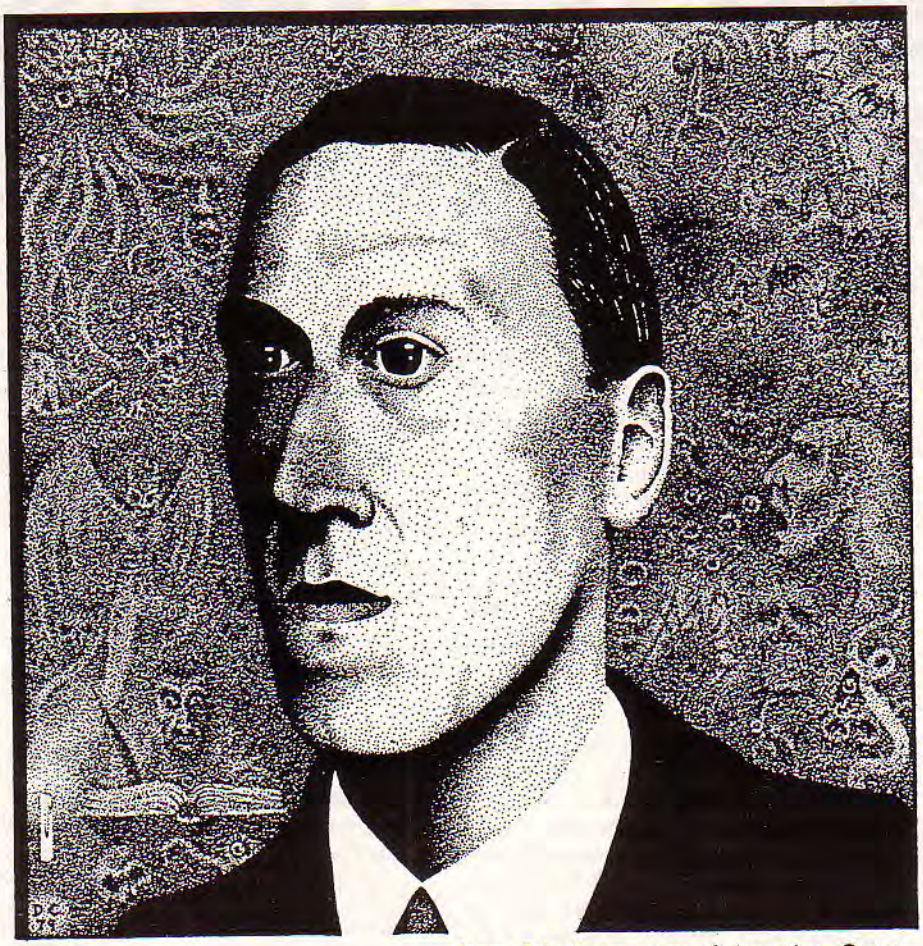
IMAGINE™ magazine

VISIT JIM EVES AT
THE CITADEL OF CHAOS
UNIT 64 THE MARKET HALL
HIGH STREET, EPSOM SURREY

Access$Visa welcomed

Tel. Epsom (037.27) 29095

Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937)



Part of the tradition of being a writer of horror stories, it seems, is that you attract more attention once dead than you ever did in life. Partly this is due to the audience that the horror writer attracts. That audience is bound to contain a high proportion of people prepared to believe in the existence of *things from beyond* and other grim individuals who can only be mentioned in italics.

Thus it is that people today who have heard of Howard Phillips Lovecraft are prone to believe that he was more than just a fiction writer with a particularly vivid imagination. Some believe he was offering a warning; that he was in touch with the Great Old Ones and was preparing the world for the horror of their coming. One rumour I heard before I knew any better was that concerning the circumstances of his death. A recluse, Lovecraft is supposed to have journeyed into the nearest town for supplies at intervals stretching over months. After one such interval had gone well beyond the normal bounds, someone went to investigate, and found Lovecraft sitting bolt upright in bed, quite dead, with his eyes gaping in horror, as if *something....*

Nothing could be further from the truth. In March 1937, after a period of wasting illness, a specialist diagnosed cancer, and Lovecraft was admitted into hospital, where he died on the 15th, five months short of his forty-seventh birthday. Whilst his life was certainly full of irregularities — of a pathetic, human nature — he remained completely unbothered by visits from Cthulhu or any of the other Great Old Ones. Sadly, unless one or all of the many reports of Lovecraft appearing as a ghost prove to be true, he lived a remarkably un-Gothic life. As is often the case, the myth is greater than the man.

The appeal of HPL to readers of horror, and to the designers of the **Call of Cthulhu** game, comes from his ability to conjure up an aura of impending doom. If you analyse his work, it soon becomes apparent that it will not stand up to the kind of literary criticism most O-level students could manage. His narrative style is appalling: vast tracts of weak descriptive prose, written in the first person singular, with little or no dialogue, in archaic Baroque language. Throughout, he uses words like 'horrible', 'ghastly' and 'unbelievable' profusely, as if lacking less subjective adjectives to terrorise the reader with. Further investigation of a sequence of mythos stories would reveal a further flaw; the effective sense of horror is brought out by a particular plot device, and the characterisation of the 'hero' is repetitive to the point where one wonders if one is not re-reading the same story.

But what a good story it is! In places a little dated, but still retaining a sense of power, the terrible beings of the Mythos are revealed, slowly, tortuously. They are not just powerful, like the giant gorilla of some other pre-war fantasy, they are so awesome that merely to gaze upon them is to invite insanity! In the earlier stories, in which the influence of Poe and Dunsany is strongest, the meeting of man and monster is a meeting of a small element of good and the omnipresence of evil. The moral of the stories is that man must listen! — he must believe that these *things* will destroy all in their path unless the warnings of the narrator are heeded. The fact that the narrator is usually strait-jacketed and tucked away in an asylum because of what he saw is the ultimate and terrible irony. Many of the stories follow the formula whereby they end with the doom of mankind implicit in the fact that the narrator remains, alone, the sole believer. Soon, it will be *too late....*

Lovecraft wrote about sixty short stories in his career, most of which only found their way into print in book form well after his death. Most of his less-than-prodigious published ouput appeared in small circulation pulp magazines, like **Weird Tales**, for whom he became the major contributor. It is largely due to the work of his friend, August Derleth, that his popularity is what it is today. He founded Arkham House publishing, and collected most of HPL's manuscripts together in volumes, first editions of which sell for hundreds of dollars today. Throughout his life, Lovecraft's intermittent attempts to sell his short stories to book publishers were failures. They constantly asked him to return with a novel-length story, but he did not. Nor could he discipline himself to make use of his non-fiction skills, which would also have found a ready market. Instead he existed on a shoestring, eating only sparingly, yet finding the money to maintain a vast level of correspondence.

It was left to others to take the man's works and to mould them into a worthy product. Derleth not only published existing Lovecraft stories, he worked part-finished manuscripts into publishable material, and tidied up the disparate strands of the Cthulhu mythos to create a coherent whole. Other authors used this background as a base for their own writings, expanding the Cthulhu mythos still further. Brian Lumley, whose **Mirror of Nitocris** begins on page 7, is one British exponent of this. If you enjoy it, or become curious after playing the **Call of Cthulhu** game, take the time to search out one of the Arkham House collections of short stories, and read Lovecraft for yourself. But keep the door locked, and the lights bright, or the ghastly unbelievable *things* might come for you!

Paul Cockburn

ILLUMINATIONS

Transatlantic Tales

Two months ago we gave you the low-down on the plans that TSR Inc had for the **D&D®** game. Now let's look at the Advanced version.

The revision of the **AD&D™** game will restart after the completion of the D&D game, perhaps as late as 1987. There will be many changes to the system, with some additions, a few deletions, and a thorough re-editing to make it more accessible. What now seems clear is that rumours about a **Players Handbook II** and a **DMG II** are unfounded. Instead, there will be a new **PH** to deal with the expanded character classes. It seems that the psionics rules will be dropped; that the monk will be removed to re-appear in a planned book for eastern campaigns where it will be joined by the ronin, ninja, etc; and that the paladin will be become a sub-class of the cavalier. Projected classes, like the savant and the jester, will appear in **DRAGON®** and **IMAGINE™** magazines beforehand, and will be 'ironed out' before they appear in the new book.

More plans for this and other RPGs will be outlined next month. For now, let's take a quick look at forthcoming products.

The D&D game: The **Shady Dragon Inn** accessory is now on sale. Next up will be the **D&D Combat Shield**; module B6 **Veiled Society**; and X6 **Lathan's Gold**. The release of the **Companion Set** has gone back to the late summer.

Advanced: Rush out and get the British written and designed UK2 **The Sentinel**, the 1983 GamesFair competition module (part 1!). Also coming are N2 **Forest Oracle**; UK3 (also brilliant!) **The Gauntlet**; and the first of the Dragonlance epic, DL1 **Dragons of Despair**.

Other RPGs: Watch out for the **Marvel SuperHeroes** game late in the spring, plus supporting modules, featuring the Avengers, Spiderman, and the X-Men. Also coming are TS006 **Ace of Clubs** and the **TOP SECRET® Companion** (new classes, new skills, new weapons); BH5 **Range War**; **GAMMA WORLD** character sheets; GB5 **Death In Spades**; SF-KH1 **Dramune Run**, SF-KH2 **Mutiny on the Eleanor Moraes** and the **STAR FRONTIERS** character sheets.

Plus: the **BLUE AND GRAY™**, **DRIVE ON STALINGRAD™** and **BATTLES FOR THE ARDENNES™** games.

British Grenadiers

Grenadier Models, the US miniature figures manufacturers, have some new items available in Britain. Two sets in the **Dark Crystal** range introduce us to the delights of Geflings; Pod Persons (People?); an urRu Master; Skeksis and Aughra, Keeper of the Secrets. Selected figures from most Grenadier ranges are being sold singly in Britain as an experiment. This facility is not available to US purchasers and indicates Grenadier's recognition of characteristics peculiar to the British market. Several new sets in Grenadier'a official 25mm **Traveller** range are promised shortly.

Superlative Photography

Joe Dever and Gary Chalk, a productive pair of itinerant innovators, are writing a new column for White Christmas (or something). Interesting thing about it is that they promise to use 'superlative photography' (which will be in colour every other issue) as illustration. Could it be that a leaf is being taken out of **Miniature Wargames**' book? That magazine has succeeded as a publication catering for wargamers where so many others have tried and failed, thanks primarily, so it is said by those who know, to their liberal use of colour photies of model soldiers.

Prime Moving Force

Beast Enterprises, publishers of **Tortured Souls**, are actively seeking scenario material from hopeful designers. Although they have plenty of AD&D material available, they are on the look-out for promising work for other games systems. The TS format permits designers to give their talent full rein since space restrictions are not a problem. However, Basil Barrett of Beast tells me that currently they do not pay contributors (or staff members for that matter) apart from a copy of the issue their scenario appears in. They believe people work better if they do so for their own satisfaction rather than pay. Really? Who was it said 'only a fool writes for any other reason than for money?' Actually, I think a genuine interest and commitment is likely to be the prime moving force to stimulate people to produce such work but let's not forget that it **is** real work and it asks a lot of people to do it for nothing at all.

Public Benefit

Steve Jackson Games, producers of that paean of American civilisation, **Car Wars**, have appointed Games Workshop of London as their exclusive British agent. Previously, they had supplied several UK wholesalers. So far, it is not apparent how, if at all, this will affect the retail supply of SJ games, but details of the whole range to be carried should be available from GW shortly.

IMAGINE magazine would like to thank Doug Cowie for his help with the preparation of these items.

International Acclaim

Standard Games & Publications are well to the fore of that pioneering group of British manufacturers who are chancing their collective arms in the adventure games business. They are putting a lot of effort into reaching a wider audience than just that of the board wargames enthusiast. The style and presentation of their games has already proved very popular with role-players, for example. The recent release **Siege** (reviewed on p28), a skirmish boardgame of medieval warfare, has been even more successful than their first game, **Cry Havoc**, which received considerable international acclaim. Incidentally, the two games are complimentary, maps and pieces being freely interchangeable between them. Standard's other two recent games, **Speed & Steel** and **Thunde-rin' Guns**

have both just been reduced in price; S&S down to £9.00 and TG to £6.95. Naturally the assembled peasantry, led by your columnist (forelock tugger extra-ordinaire) applauded this magnanimity with fervour. To be honest, if components are any yardstick, the new prices are much more sensible. Future releases from Standard include a skirmish boardgame of Samurai battles, designed with the intention of being readily adapted to play with 25mm figures. A tie-in with a leading manufacturer of a range of Samurai figures will probably be announced shortly.

SETTING THE RIGHT SCENE FOR ROLE PLAYING IS EASY WITH . . .

FLEXTILES

These new sheets of colourful, flexible plastic scenery add a new dimension to role playing.

Adaptable and reusable, each 25mm scale plastic tile can be drawn on with water-soluble inks.

And you can see right through to the map underneath — so no more fudging of character positions.

But, perhaps best of all, Flextiles lay very flat indeed on your paper, vinyl or acetate maps, so they wont move until you want to move them.

FLEXTILES — one scene you'll always remember. Available NOW are:

SET 1. Vehicles	— a selection of cars, and motorcycles
SET 2. Street Scenery	— roadblocks, signs, girders, bias etc.
SET 3. Laboratory Scenery	— consoles, experimental equipment, benches etc.
SET 4. Landscape	— trees, bushes, ground cover, potted plants etc.

Flextiles are available at your local games shop or direct by mail from us

FLYING BUFFALO

P.O. Box 100, Bath Street,
Walsall, W. Midlands.

Please make all payments (cheque/PO) to Flying Buffalo.
Add 10% p&p to all orders and allow 14 days for delivery.

HIGH STANDARDS

Standard Games and Publications Ltd
Arlon House, Station Road,
Kings Langley, Herts. WD4 8LF
Telephone: 092/77 68328

Dungeon Accessory Pack I. £2.95.
Boxed with full colour illustration. Contains 12 sheets of illustrated card of flooring, stone, bare ground, wood, steps, corridors, pits, grills, 1 sheet of graph paper for mapping.

Dungeon Accessory Pack II. £2.95
Boxed with full colour illustration. This pack is designed to expand your adventure, includes, boats, rafts, trees, doors, windows, table, chairs, beds, treasure, skulls, swords and many more items in this pack. 12 sheets, 1 graph paper.

Jumbo Hex Pad £2.95
Size 17" x 25" of large consecutively numbered hexes suitable for campaign mapping and expanding on commercially produced board games, contains 10 sheets.

Felt Hex £12.95
Playing surface for role playing and the wargamer. One inch hexes printed on high quality felt, 6' x 4' colours green, blue, sand, black.
Plain Felt £6.25 per metre, 72 inch wide, colours green, blue, sand and black.

Hex Paper Pad £1.95
For all mapping needs also useful for role playing adventures. Size A4 Pad containing 50 sheets.

Macro Hex Pad £1.95
A hex paper with a large hex overprinted, enabling an area from a campaign map to be blown up and drawn in detail. 50 sheets.

Jumbo Hex Clear Plastic £1.80
This is a sheet of clear plastic for use as an overlay.
Size 17" x 25" can be used over and over again. Hexes are numbered consecutively.

Jumbo 1" Square £2.95
10 sheets 17" x 25", 1" grids printed on parchment paper with air brush terrain.

Campaigns in Focus £9.95 per set
40 pictures, full explanation on rear Vol I The Crimean War, Vol II The 2nd Afghan War 1879

Role Playing Character Pads £1.95
50 A4 sheets of paper suitable for Dungeon Adventure. Saves hours of writing.

Cry Havoc £9.95
Medieval skirmish game of knights, peasants, bowmen. Companion game for Siege.

Starship Captain £12.95
Science fiction game, 9 playboards, realistic action. All components sold separate **£2.85.**

City of Sorcerers £9.95
Fantasy adventure game in two parts.

Siege (New!) £9.95
Companion game for Cry Havoc with compatible scenarios. Maps and counters sold separate **£2.45**

Thunde-rin-guns (New!) £6.99
Role playing game set in the wild west. Full colour illustrated characters.

Speed and Steel (New!) £9.00
Set in Europe in late 1930's early 1940's.

Card Warriors £1.50 per sheet
Full colour figures to aid role players and wargamers.
DA1 Saxon Army, DA2 Norman Army, F1 Dungeon Adventure, F2 Savages and Swordsmen, US1 Union Infantry, US2 Confederated Infantry, US3 Union Cavalry, US4 Confederate Cavalry, US5 Civil War Artillery.

I enclosed cheque/P.O. .....

Please send me .....

Name/address .....

.....

Send to the above address. Postage and package free U.K. only. Overseas add 15% to the total cost. For free brochure please send s.a.e. ACCESS taken. Trade enquiries welcome both U.K. and abroad.

Games

FOR WAR, FANTASY AND SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING

50-54 Manchester St.,
Liverpool L1 6ER.
Tel: 051 236 2605

Unit 20, Merrion Centre,
Leeds 2.
Tel: 0532 456376

63 Allerton Rd.,
Liverpool L18
Tel: 051 722 9022

MAIL ORDER
85-87 Victoria St.,
Liverpool L1 6DG.
Tel: 051 227 1505

TRADE
89 Victoria St.,
Liverpool L1 6DG
Tel: 051 236 2605

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES by FGU

CHIVALRY & SORCERY Second Edition
Chivalry & Sorcery: 3 volume boxed set £14.55
C & S Sourcebook: revised edition £5.85
C & S Sourcebook 2 supplementary material £4.75
Swords & Sorcerers revised second edition £4.35
Bireme & Galley C & S naval combat £10.95
Castle Plans 25 mm scale castle floor plans £3.95
Fortification Plans 25 mm floor plans £3.95
Homes & Hovels 25 mm cut-out medieval buildings £4.35
Towers for Tyrants 25 mm cut-out medieval keep £5.25
AFTERMATH – post holocaust rpg. boxed £16.95
Into the Ruins. Aftermath scenario book £3.95
Operation Morpheus. Aftermath scenario book £5.85
DAREDEVILS rpg set in the 1930's.
Boxed Set rulebook, scenarios, ref's screen £10.95
Daredevils Adventures, book of three complete adventures £3.65
PRIVATEERS & GENTLEMEN – naval rpg 1755-1820
Boxed Set rules, charts etc £12.50
BUNNIES & BURROWS – rabbit role-playing £4.35

VILLAINS & VIGILANTES 2nd Edition – Boxed set £8.75
2nd Edition rulebook only £4.35
Crisis at Crusader Citadel – intro adventure £3.65
Death Duel with the Destroyers – V & V adventure £3.65
Island of Dr. Apocalypse – V & V Adventure £3.65
FORCE – V & V adventure £3.65
Opponents Unlimited V & V NPC's and their organisations £3.65
WILD WEST western role playing
Boxed set rules, maps, charts etc £7.95
Trouble on Windows Peak. Wild West scenario pack £2.95
BUSHIDO Detailed rpg set in the Land of Nippon
Boxed set, rule books, maps, charts, tables etc £12.95
Valley of the Mists Bushido Scenario pack £3.65
OTHER SUNS – Challenging sf rpg
Boxed set: 2 rulebooks refs screen and charts £11.75
MERC modern mercenary rpg, skirmish wargame
Boxed set, rules, plastic overlay, charts etc £9.55
Merc supplement; more rules & skills £3.65

If you're for the ultimate Fantasy Role-Playing Game, look no further. This is it. – White Dwarf Magazine

BUSHIDO™

ROLE PLAYING ADVENTURE IN FEUDAL JAPAN

Come adventure on the Misty Isles of Nippon where a man's honor and fame are as important as his accomplishments. In BUSHIDO you can experience the stuff of Legends – martial mastery, demons, war, magicians, assassins, bakemono, sublime arts and more! The boxed set includes two volumes, map of Nippon, and referee screen

If you are familiar with the earlier Tyr or Phoenix versions of BUSHIDO, you are only familiar with a part of the world of Nippon.

£12.95

Also Available:
VALLEY OF THE MISTS
Mystery, magic and intrigue in Hida Province.

GRENADIER MODELS

Top quality metal figures from the best known miniatures company in the U.S. and now available in Britain. Below is a selection of their range. Send SAE for full lists.

CALL OF CTHULHU – Officially Approved range. **£7.95** per box.
Box 1: Adventurers **Box 2:** Creatures
DRAGONLORDS Excellent fantasy range. **£5.50** per box.
Box 1: Wizards **Box 2:** Halflings Box 3: Dwarves **Box 4:** Hirelings **Box 5:** Fighting Men **Box 6:** Specialists **Box 7:** Females
Box 8: Thieves **Box 9:** Wizard's Room **Box 10:** Horrors of the Marsh **Box 11:** Orcs of the Severed Hand **Box 12:** Subterranean Terrors **Box 13:** Adventurers – Golden Quest
AUTODUEL – Official **Car Wars** Miniatures all at **£2.95** per blister pack.
1. 4 Vans **2.** 4 Pick-Ups **3.** 4 Luxury Cars **4.** 4 Mid-size cars **5.** 7 Compacts and sub compacts **6.** 4 Station Wagons **7.** 10 Motor-bikes **8.** 4 Assorted Wrecks **9.** 10 Side-cars & Turrets **10.** 2 Articulated Trucks
Autoduel Miniatures are to 1/180 scale
OGRE MINIATURES – Official range **£3.25** per pack, unless otherwise marked
1. Ogre Mark V **£5.50** (1 per pack) **2.** 4 Heavy Tanks **3.** 4 Missile Tanks **4.** 4 GEV's **5.** 4 Howitzers **6.** 4 Mobile Howitzers **7.** 5 Light Tanks **8.** 2 Command Posts **9.** 4 Combine GEV's
Ogre Miniatures are to 1/285 scale
TRAVELLER – Official range. **£7.95** per box
Box 1: Imperial Marines
FANTASY LORDS – new fantasy range all at **£7.95** per box
Box 1: Dragons of the Emerald Idol **Box 2:** Skeletons – Raiders of the Undead **Box 3:** Elves of the Sylvan Brotherhood

15mm SPACE OPERA FIGURES

The first four releases of a fine range of SF 15 mm miniatures are now available. Supplied in packets of 5 different figures, they combine quality design with sensible prices **65p** per packet.
SOH1 HUMAN ADVENTURERS SOA1 ALIEN ADVENTURERS
SOH2 HUMAN ADVENTURERS SOA2 ALIEN ADVENTURERS

NICE DICE PRICE!

Standard polyset 6 dice £1.20
Or with inked numerals £1.30
Deluxe polyset with inked numerals £1.30
Fireball polyset £1.50
Or with inked numerals £1.75
Transparent Gem polyset £1.95
Or with inked numerals £2.25
Five assorted colour D6 ..... 40p
30 sided dice 70p
30 sided dice inked 80p
Nickel/Copper Plated D30 ..... £1.00
Nickel/Copper Plated other sizes 50p

ARMORY ACRYLIC PAINTS

A fine selection of over 60 different colours including such esoteria as POMEGRANATE; BUBONIC BLUE: PALOMINO & NIPPLE PINK! More normal colours also available.
75p per .75 oz jar.
Send SAE for full lists.

BARCLAYCARD
VISA
AMERICAN EXPRESS

WHY NOT ORDER BY TELEPHONE USING ACCESS, BARCLAYCARD, OR AMERICAN EXPRESS
save the trouble of sending a letter and cheque.
WE PREFER THIS METHOD. We can try to answer any queries and you will also be sure you are getting exactly what you want and sooner normally by return of post.
P&P: UK & BFPO: Order value over £6.00 – free
Up to £6.00 add 25p
OVERSEAS: Charged at cost. Please allow for this in your order. If in doubt write or phone.

OVERSEAS TRADE ORDERS WELCOME

FGU BOARDGAMES (BG) & RULES (R)

Diadem: Science Fiction BG £15.75
Lords & Wizards: Fantasy BG £11.95
Colony Delta: Science Fiction BG £9.75
Oregon Trail: BG. Good solo £10.35
Star Explorer: BG Excellent solo £11.95
Archworld: Rules for fantasy battles £4.35
Galactic Conquest: SF RPG rules £2.95
Odysseus: History based fantasy rpg £3.95
Royal Armies of the Hyborean Age: R £4.35
Starships & Spacemen: SF RPG £4.95

STANDARD GAMES & PUBLICATIONS

Cry Havoc – medieval skirmish game £9.95
City of Sorcerers – fantasy boardgame £9.95
Starship Captain – SF boardgame £12.95
The Village – extra map for Cry Havoc £2.45
The Crossroads – as above £2.45
The Forest – new map for Cry Havoc £2.45
Dungeon Accessories: box 1 ..... £2.95
Dungeon Accessories: box 2 ..... £2.95
Felt hex – cloth playing surface; blue, sand or green. All with printed hex grid £12.95
Clear Plastic Hex Sheet – overlay £1.80
Siege – NEW compatible with Cry Havoc £9.95
Thunde-rin' Guns – Old West excitement £6.99
Speed & Steel – Blitzkreig boardgame £9.00

TUNNELS & TROLLS
FANTASY GAMES SYSTEM

Rulebook (2nd edition) £3.95
Tunnels & Trolls. Boxed Set £6.95
Naked Doom Solo Dungeon £2.25
Sorcerer Solitaire Solo Dungeon £2.25
Sword for Hire Solo Dungeon £2.50
Labyrinth Solo Dungeon £2.25
Buffalo Castle Solo Dungeon £2.25
City of Terror Solo Adventure £3.95
Beyond the Silvered Pane Solo D £3.00
Arena of Khazan Solo Adventure £2.50
Weirdworld Solo Dungeon £2.25
Overkill Solo Dungeon £2.25
Dungeon of the Bear Levels 1,2,3 ..... £3.50
Uncle Uglies Underground £1.50
Circle of Ice Solo Adventure 75p
Abyss Solo Adventure 75p
Goblin Lake Solo Adventure 75p
Catacombs of the Bear Cult 1 ..... £3.00
Sea of Mystery Solo Adventure £3.00
Grimtooth's Traps Game aid £3.75
Deathtrap Equalizer Solo Dungeon £3.30
Blue Frog Tavern Solo Adventure £2.50
Misty Wood Solo Adventure £2.50
City Book Aid for all FRP systems £7.50
Sorcerer's Apprentice Magazine £1.75
Grimtooth's Too Game and Vol 2 ..... £3.75
Gamesmen of Kasar £3.00

THE BEST IN SF from FGU

SPACE OPERA – complete, complex compelling.
OTHER SUNS – a totally new system which does not encourage shoot-em-up play.
Space Opera **£14.55** Other Suns **£11.75**
SCIENCE FICTION ROLE PLAYING COMES OF AGE

TSR UK Ltd.

D & D Basic Set rules, dice, ... £9.50
D & D Expert Set, rules dice, adv £9.50
D & D Expert Rules only £3.95
D & D Character Records sheets £2.95
A D & D Dungeon Masters Guide £10.95
A D & D Players Handbook £9.95
A D & D Monster Manual £9.95
A D & D Monster Manual 2 ..... £9.95
A D & D Deities + Demigods £9.95
A D & D Fiend Folio £9.95
A D & D Dungeon Masters Screen £4.95
A D & D Character Record sheets £3.95
A D & D Player Character Folder £3.95
A D & D NPC Character Record sheets £3.95
A D & D DM's Adventure Log £3.95
Rogues Gallery NPC stats £3.95
World of Greyhawk – revised boxed edition £9.50
AC1 – Shady Dragon Inn (D&D) £3.95
"Amazing" magazine 75p

MODULES – BASIC D & D
B1; B2; B3; B4; B5 ..... each £4.50
M1; M2: (solo modules) ..... each £4.50

MODULES – EXPERT D & D
X1; X2; X3; X4, X5; O1 ..... each £4.50

MODULES – A D & D
S2 ..... £3.50
A1; A2; A3; A4; C1; C2; D1-2; D3 ..... each £4.50
EX1; EX2; G1-3; I1; I2; I3; I4 ..... each £4.50
L1; L2; N1; O1; S1; T1; UK1 ..... each £4.50
U1; U2; U3; WG4 ..... each £4.50
S3; S4 ..... each £5.50
I5; I6 ..... each £4.95
Dragon Magazine £2.50
Gamma World: NEW edition £9.50
G W Modules: GW1; GW2; GW3; GW4 ..... each £3.95
G W Mini Module & Referee's Screen £3.95
Boot Hill £9.50
B H Modules: BH1; BH2; BH3; BH4 ..... each £3.95
B H Mini Module & Referees Screen £3.95
Top Secret (including Module 1) £9.50
T S Modules: TS2; TS3; TS4; TS5 ..... each £3.95
TS Mini Module & Referee's Screen £3.95
Agent Dossiers (TS Character Sheets) £3.95
Gangbusters £9.50
G B Modules : GB1; GB2; GB3 ..... each £3.95
Starfrontiers (inc. Module 0) £9.50
Knight Hawks; for Starfrontiers £9.50
S F Modules: SF1 SF2; SF3 ..... each £4.50
S F Mini Module & Referees Screen £3.95
Dawn Patrol £8.50
Fantasy Forest 4.95
Endless Quest Books ..... each 95p
Ares (S F/Fantasy mag + game) £3.95

ENDLESS GAMES

Floor plans for 15 or 25mm figures
Dungeon Plans – Labyrinthine £3.99
Dungeon Plans – Spacious £3.99
Cave Plans – Tortuous £3.99
Cave Plans – Cavernous £3.95

HERO GAMES

Champions – boxed super-hero rpg £12.75
Champions II – supplementary material £6.95
Enemies – NPC opponents for Champions. £4.50
Enemies II – more opposition £4.40
Island of Dr. Destroyer – Champions module . £3.95
Escape from Stronghold – Champions module. £4.50
Espionage – spy role-playing game £10.95
Border Crossing – Espionage adventure £3.95
Deathstroke – Espionage adventure £4.50

JAMES BOND ROLE PLAYING GAME

Basic Game: rulebook £7.95
De Luxe Game: rulebook; game aids £11.95
Q Manual: equipment book £7.95
Game Master Pack: reference aids £7.95
Adventure Module – Goldfinger £5.95
Adventure Module – Octopussy £5.95

AVALON HILL fantasy/sf boardgames

Alpha Omega £11.95
Amoeba Wars £13.45
Dragon Hunt £13.45
Dune £13.45
Freedom in the Galaxy £16.95
Magic Realm £13.45
Starship Troopers £13.45
Titan £13.45
UFO £5.95
Wizard's Quest £13.45
Wizard's £16.95
Samurai £11.95
Circus Maximus £8.95
Gladiator £8.95
Down with the King £10.45
Elric £13.45
Dragon Pass £13.45
Gunslinger £16.95
Machiavelli £11.95

COMPUTER GAMES FROM AVALON HILL
Shootout (at OK Galaxy):* A32 P8 At16 T16 TC16 ..... £14.95
Moon Patrol:* **At16** £18.95
Andromeda Conquest:* T16 A16 P16 At32 ..... £13.45
Lords of Karma:* T48 A32 P32 ..... £14.95
Conflict 2500:* T16 A16 P16 At32 ..... £11.95
Empire of the Overmind:* T48 A48 At40 . £21.95
Voyager 1:* TC16 T16 A32 At32 P32 ..... £14.95
Galaxy:* T16 A16 P16 At16 ..... £14.95
Space Station Zulu:* At32 ..... £14.95
Gypsy:* At16 ..... £15.95
Telengard: + At48 ..... £18.95
Vorrak: + At48 ..... £18.95
GFS Sorceress:* At40 A48 T48 ..... £21.95
KEY – * = on cassette; + = on disc; P = Pet A = Apple 11; At = Atari; T = TRS 80; TC = TRS Colour; numbers = memory required in K.

★★★★★★★★★★★★

MAIL ORDER SERVICE

HERE'S WHAT WE OFFER:

* A **VERY** FAST TURN ROUND
* POST PAID ON ORDERS OVER £6.00
* INFORMATIVE **FREE** NEWSLETTER
* SPECIAL OFFERS
* TELEPHONE ORDERS BY CREDIT CARD

Details of how to order are given elsewhere on this page. Why not give us a try – you probably deserve a pleasant surprise.

★★★★★★★★★★★★

TRADE ENQUIRIES
MOST ITEMS ON THIS PAGE ARE AVAILABLE TO THE TRADE
SEND FOR FULL LISTS

TITAN BOOKS

Judge Dredd 1 * Judge Dredd 2
Cursed Earth 1 * Cursed Earth 2
Judge Caligula 1 * Judge Caligula 2
Judge Child 1 * Judge Child 2
Judge Death * Robo-Hunters 1
ABC Warriors 1 * ABC Warriors 2
Ro-Busters 1 * Ro-Busters 2
all the above: £3.50 each
Nemesis * Robo-Hunters 2
the above 2: £3.95 each

Please mention IMAGINE magazine when replying to advertisements

DARKLAW

A Call of Cthulhu Mini-scenario

by Simon Redgrave

This mini-scenario is suitable for a party of 3-5 Investigators with any levels of skills, and can be incorporated into an existing campaign with minimum effort on the part of the Keeper (Games Master).

If you intend screaming in this scenario please stop reading here. The rest of the information is for the Keeper alone.

Keeper's Background

Amelia and Alfred Besant were a happily married, outwardly conventional, couple. Amelia was not an outgoing person, but was always courteous to her neighbours. Alfred was the opposite, a church-going Republican activist, deeply involved in the affairs of the community.

Then, without warning, Alfred's behaviour changed completely. He became distant and began to spend much of his time watching his wife and her doings. Late one Autumn evening in 1898 Alfred arrived at the local police precinct in a very distressed state. He was covered in blood, a butcher's knife was clutched in his hand, and he was babbling incoherently. When the police visited the house they could find no sign of Amelia, but plenty of evidence that some kind of struggle had occurred. There was little choice but to try Alfred Besant for the murder of his wife. Despite the lack of a body Alfred was convicted and confined in the local asylum. He never spoke again.

On August 3rd, 1907, Alfred Besant was found dead in his cell, having taken his own life. It seemed that no-one would ever know what he had seen or done. The house had been shut up when he was jailed, and upon his death the family lawyers gave orders that it was to be locked and boarded up. It has remained that way until the present day (sometime during 1922), but now appears to be haunted — strange lights have been seen, and children and animals will not go near the place.

The truth of the Besant affair is bizarre. Amelia was a priestess of a minor Y'golonac cult, a splinter group of one in Boston. Alfred did not know this when he married her, and was horrified when he discovered the truth. He studied his wife's books of arcane and forbidden knowledge, and this alone partially unhinged his mind. He scratched the Elder Sign on the kitchen door and on a butcher's knife, then attacked his wife while Y'golonac was taking possession of her body. The sight of the partial transformation to Y'golonac's form completed his descent into insanity.

Due to a fluke of the occult and the effects of the Elder Sign, Y'golonac was unable to leave Amelia's body, so she entered a state of undeath. Alfred realised this with what remained of his intellect and hid the body. Recently, the house has been entered by Howard Martin, a distant relative of Amelia and a fellow cult member, with his disciples. After locating the body using occult methods, Martin has been attempting to extract information from Amelia's still-active brain, using a machine that he has developed.

Incorporation into an existing campaign

DARKLAW may be set in any New England town in 1922. References to town institutions are intentionally vague. The Keeper may add as much detail as he or she likes. The Keeper can incorporate this adventure into a campaign in a number of ways, but the Investigators should be given no hints as to what they are about to encounter.

The evidence leading to the Besant house can be as indirect as the Keeper wishes. The Investigators may discover references to the house at other occult locations — a newspaper clipping about Alfred Besant's trial, a note in a book margin about Amelia and her cult connection (but not her importance) or a map of an area of a New England town with the house clearly marked — or be sent (by whatever patron they have) to investigate the mysterious 'hauntings'.

Sources of Background Information

Once the Investigators have realised that the Besant house is to be the area of their adventure they may well wish to research into any background material that may be available. These are:

Police: The police have all the superficial details of the Besant case. They do not know of the occult connections of Mrs Besant, or of the 'hauntings'. Investigators should have to use *Fast Talk* skill to gain access and *Law* skill to extract the information.

Asylum Records: The asylum records give details of Alfred Besant's incarceration and medical condition — showing that he was suffering from stupefaction (see **CALL OF CTHULHU** rule book, p24, Table 4B). Successful use of *Fast Talk* skill will gain access to the records and use of *Psychoanalysis* skill will gain understanding of the information.

Newspaper Archives: These contain much the same information as the police records, though in a sensationalised account spread over several issues. Use of *Fast Talk* or a character background as a journalist will be required to look at the records. Information may be extracted automatically, but the Keeper should decide how long this will take.

County Records Office: The CRO has details of the trial of Alfred Besant. Other records will show that the Besant house is currently unoccupied and owned by the Martin family from California. Anyone may inspect the records, but successful use of *Law* skill is required to gain the information.

Local Museum: The town museum has the butcher's knife that Alfred was carrying. Scratched on the blade, but hidden by the dried blood that still covers it, is the Elder Sign. Investigators making a *Spot Hidden* roll will notice that something is engraved upon the blade.

Neighbours: The people who live near the Besant house will know little, other than the fact that 'somebody' — never the speaker — has seen

lights in the old house. The Besant place is shunned by everybody, and the locals use the memory of Alfred as a bogeyman to scare disobedient children. A number of people will also mention (along with much other gossip) that a few cats have disappeared recently.

The House

The Besant house is set in overgrown gardens. It is twenty yards back from the main road, protected from prying eyes by the trees which have been untended since Alfred departed. The house is still in a reasonable condition, despite having had little attention for the past twenty years. It is furnished throughout in conventional 1890s style. All the downstairs windows are barred with wooden shutters, as are the front and back doors. The upstairs windows appear to be locked, and very filthy.

One person may attempt to force one of the downstairs windows (success requires a STR of 20 or more) and the doors may be forced by two people (requiring a STR of 35 or more). A 5-minute search will reveal a stepladder hidden behind some overgrown shrubs. Despite its mildewed condition it is still sound and can be used to reach the upstairs windows (these can be forced open by any person with a STR of 4 or greater). A *Spot Hidden* roll must be made to see through any of the windows, and then no real detail can be made out.

Breaking through one of the doors or ground floor windows will alert the current occupants of the house (Bruno, Duval, Darby, Martin and Darklaw the raven — see the **Character Roster** at the end of this scenario). Duval and Darby will be sent to investigate the noise, while the other men attempt to hide the evidence of their occult activities. They will not be outwardly hostile to the Investigators unless they are met with force; they will merely demand that the Investigators leave the premises immediately. If this request is not complied with they will threaten to call the police — an empty threat since they do not wish to have the police involved. If their bluff is called, Duval and Darby will use force and call for help. Darklaw the raven will arrive 1d4 rounds later and immediately attack. Bruno will arrive 1d3 rounds after Darklaw. Martin will not become involved in combat unless he has no choice.

Entry through one of the upstairs windows will not immediately alert Martin and his disciples. Provided that the Investigators keep noise to a minimum they will be able to move about without attracting attention. Engaging in conversation with any of the occupants will not necessarily alert the others — unless that particular disciple is allowed to warn his fellows. Fighting will always alert the occultists and draw them to the scene of a fight in a similar manner to that described above.

1. The Foyer
This room is littered with rubbish and old newspapers. In the middle of the floor stands an old bicycle with its saddle and front wheel missing. The rubbish blocks the front doorway, but it can be cleared away in two melee rounds. A successful *Spot Hidden* roll will reveal a key ring hanging from a hook by the front door, now covered by cobwebs. There are four keys on the ring — one each for the front door, the back door, the ground floor windows and the first floor windows.

2. The Dining/Sitting Room
This large room is very delapidated. There is nothing of relevance to the Investigators' mission.

3. The Kitchen
The north door is ajar, and inspection will show that it cannot be closed properly. Scratched on the kitchen side of it is the Elder sign, now faded almost beyond recognition — a successful *Spot Hidden* roll must be made to notice it.

Many of the room's contents — mainly tables, chairs and cupboards — have been overturned or smashed. Still in one piece are the wood-burning range which served as a cooker, and an empty chest of drawers.

The oven is the home of Duval's pet raven, Darklaw. As the door is shut, Darklaw gets in and out via the flue, which runs up through the ceiling, eventually leading into the chimney system of the house. Unless he has been previously encountered Darklaw will be in his oven/nest 50% of the time. The rest of the time he will be watching Martin's doings with the machine in room 9 with enormous interest.

Assuming the Investigators are able to defeat Darklaw (he will flee when he has taken 5 or more points of damage), or he is absent when the oven door is opened, the Investigators will find a curious joint of meat. A successful *Zoology* skill roll will allow this to be recognised as a cat's torso. It is Darklaw who is the cause of the vanishing cats — he is eating them.

Should Darklaw be forced to flee, he will fly through the partially open northern door to the Lower Landing, up the stair well and then outside through one of the upstairs windows. Darklaw can break any of the upstairs windows. He will then attempt to find Duval or Martin.

4. The Lower Landing
From here a staircase leads up to the first floor.

5. The Library
Unless previously encountered, Duval and Darby will be in here. Their reactions to people that they regard as intruders will be as previously described. Any noise of combat in here will attract the attention of the other cult members.

The furnishing of the library includes three large leather-backed chairs, the covers now cracked with age. A spiral staircase in one corner leads up to the first floor. A search of the room will reveal a large, (brand new), bird perch, overturned and covered in beak scratches. Any Investigator making a successful *Spot Hidden* roll will notice that there is an unopened tin of birdseed in a wastepaper basket (Bruno bought this for Darklaw, to the amusement of his comrades).

The bookcases on the north, south and east walls are full of books, now largely mildewed. The original owners (Amelia and Alfred) had catholic tastes and the Keeper should feel free to make up titles for the books. There are two significant items in the bookcases.

The first is a copy of *Witch-Cults in Western Europe* (see **CALL OF CTHULHU** rules, p60, Table 6A), which contains the spell **Elder Sign**.

The second is a fragment of a page, lying on its own. It is from a copy of the *Revelations of Glaaki* (ibid). It requires a successful *Read English* roll to be understood, but it can be read on the spot in seconds. It reads thus:

'...reality, sealed forever. His manifold priests have the ability to assume his form, which can be likened to that of a headless ape. Slavering, mouth like slits gape from his palms, and with these he eats souls... '

The text is otherwise unreadable, but in spidery handwriting at the bottom of the page are the words:

'However, he may only prey upon those who have read the Revelations of Glaaki, a page of which you now hold in your hand'.

The page is a trick, left there by Amelia Besant to trap the unwary and make them vulnerable to Y'golonac. A roll on d100 less than the Investigators INTx3 will add one to the reader's *Cthulhu Mythos* skill.

6. The Stairwell
This connects room 5 (the **Library**) with the attic, and opens out onto the master bedroom on the first floor. The stairs up to the attic are wooden and unsafe, and will collapse if characters of total SIZ 30 or greater step onto them. This will attract the attention of Martin and his disciples.

7. Bedroom.
Unlike the rooms on the lower floor, this is strangely clean — no *Spot Hidden* roll is needed to notice this — for a house that has been abandoned for more than twenty years. Duval and Darby use it as a bedroom, but although it is fully provided with beds, tables, closets, etc, there are no personal items.

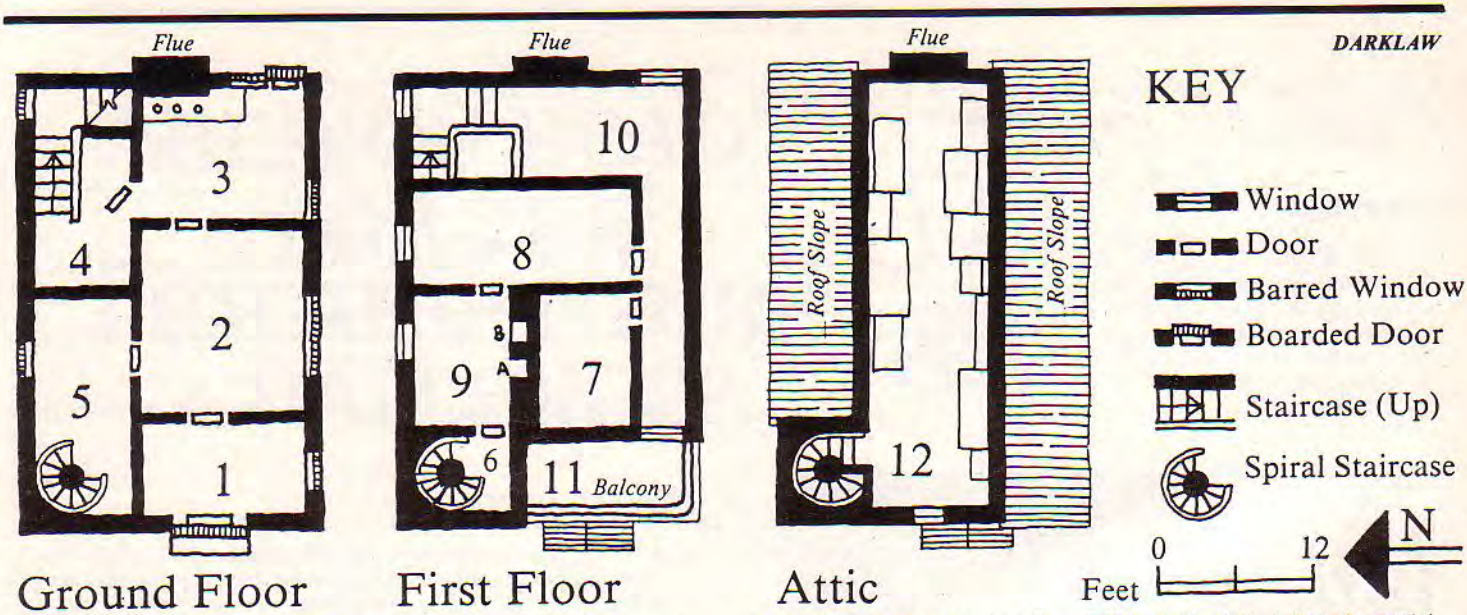
8. Bedroom
This is Martin's bedroom, and is as clean as room 7 above. Again, there are no personal items.

The connecting doorway to room 9 (the **Master Bedroom**) is wedged shut from the other side. Any attempt to force it open (a STR of 11 or more for success) will alert Martin, who will be working in here unless he has been previously encountered. If he is alerted he will call for help.

Anyone listening at the wedged door will hear a curious mechanical buzz, made by Martin's electrical apparatus.

9. The Master Bedroom
The old master bedroom is now empty of all furniture and the carpet is rolled back against one wall. In the centre of the room is a cabinet, roughly three feet in each dimension — a rough cube made of steel mounted upon a trolley.

Unless encountered elsewhere, Martin will be manipulating the controls set into this cabinet. There is a 50% chance that Darklaw will also be here, watching the operations curiously. Martin will only attack if he believes that he can win easily. If he does so he will also call for help from his disciples — Bruno will arrive 1d4 melee rounds after the call and Duval and Darby 1d3 melee rounds after him.



If all looks hopeless, or if his machine is threatened, Martin will surrender. When questioned he will first claim that he and his 'assistants' are using the house as a laboratory, well away from prying eyes. He will claim that the machine is a device for accelerated healing of burns and that he has been testing it on Darby. Martin will try to make the best of this explanation — stating that the ceremonial robes he and his disciples are wearing are laboratory coats etc. He will discourage all attempts to examine the machine.

If this fails to convince the Investigators he will claim that he is a bootlegger — and that 'things will be better for all concerned if they leave him alone'.

The cabinet is, in fact, the mental probe that Martin has been using to reach the still active brain of Amelia's corpse. In the centre of one side is a large dial with numbers ranging from 1-10. Beneath this is a sliding rheostat. The cabinet has various other dials, sockets and switches, but these are unimportant, and have no real effect upon its function in these circumstances. The cabinet hums with electricity (although it has no visible power source), and anyone touching it will receive a minor electric shock. This shock will not cause any damage.

Apart from the machine there is little of interest in the room. It is entirely wood panelled, and illumination is provided by a large candle in each corner of the room. The wedge under the connecting door to room 8 can be removed in 1 melee round.

In one wall are two alcoves, both of which originally had shelves. Those of the right hand alcove now lie in an untidy heap in front of the left hand alcove. Martin removed these after he had discovered the whereabouts of Amelia Besant's body. Her remains are hidden behind the wooden panelling at the back of the alcove. He has not uncovered the remains, because his machine has allowed Amelia's unstable brain to re-establish its severed links with her body. He is afraid that the creature will go beserk and attack him (see below for Amelia's statistics).

If the Investigators tamper with the machine they will see that as the rheostat is moved the needle on the dial moves also. If the needle reaches '4' or higher the Investigators will hear a thumping noise from behind the right hand alcove. If the needle approaches '8' this noise will become increasingly vigorous, and if the needle exceeds '8' the cadaver will burst forth and attack its tormentors. Should the Investigators break into her final resting place before they tamper with the machine, they will find Amelia's distasteful corpse in a marvellous state of preservation, virtually mummified by the dry atmosphere behind the alcove. A successful *Spot Hidden* roll will indicate that an Investigator has noticed the corpse still wears a wedding ring. However, if the reading on the dial has previously exceeded '5', the creature will be alive and hostile. It will remain in this state for five hours, before once again falling back into undeath.

Amelia Besant:

STR 19	CON 20	SIZ 13
INT 17	POW 01	DEX 02
CHA 00	EDU 13	SAN 00

MOVE 8

ARMOUR: 2 point skin, and impaling weapons do minimum damage.

SAN LOSS: If SAN roll fails, lose 1d8 SAN points. There is no loss if the roll is successful.

Her only weapons are her fists (50% attack skill, 1d6+1d6+special damage).

Due to the peculiar circumstances of her death Amelia has unusual powers and appearance, partly due to the fragment of Y'golonac trapped within her — immortal sentience being not the least of these!

She is looks hideous, her head being a compressed, rotten stump mounted askew on her shoulders. Two gaping holes are visible in the palms of her hands. She attacks once per melee round with her fists and should she hit anyone who has read a page from the *Revelations of Glaaki* (such as the one in Room 5, **the Library**) she will cause special damage. This will take the form of a permanent drain of 1 point of INT, as well as the normal damage caused by a hit. Someone who has had a page of material read to them is not vulnerable to this INT drain. If a character's INT should reach 0, the character is dead.

Amelia's corpse will follow the Investigators, even if they go outside the house. However, if it is burnt or subjected to a strong light (such as daylight), it will explode. This explosion will cause 1d4 points of damage to all those within 6 yards.

The candlesticks in the room could be sold for $75 each. The machine is worth $225 to a scientist.

10. The Upstairs Corridor

This is an almost empty corridor, the only feature of interest being the flue from room 3, **the Kitchen**. If Bruno (see character description and room 10a, below) makes a successful *Listen* roll when the Investigators enter the upper floor of the house he will be in here. He will attempt to use his *Hide in Shadows* skill to ambush the Investigators if he can.

10a. Bruno's 'Bedroom'

This section of corridor is used by Bruno as his bedroom. If he has not been encountered previously he will be here.

The corridor contains a mattress, a working man's coat with $2.02 in the pockets, a book of fairy tales, an incomplete aeroplane model built from matches and a gold locket with a picture of a middle-aged woman in it. The locket picture is of Bruno's mother, and he is deeply attached to it. The Keeper should decide — depending upon the exact circumstances — whether a threat to this locket would provoke or pacify Bruno.

11. Balcony

This will probably prove to be the Investigators' first means of entry into the house. A successful *Spot Hidden* roll will reveal chisel marks on the window frame, made when Martin and his disciples entered the house.

12. The Attic

This room is cramped, dark and rather musty. It is crammed with tea chests, which contain an assortment of interesting, but irrelevant, objects. The Keeper should feel free to create any worthless items.

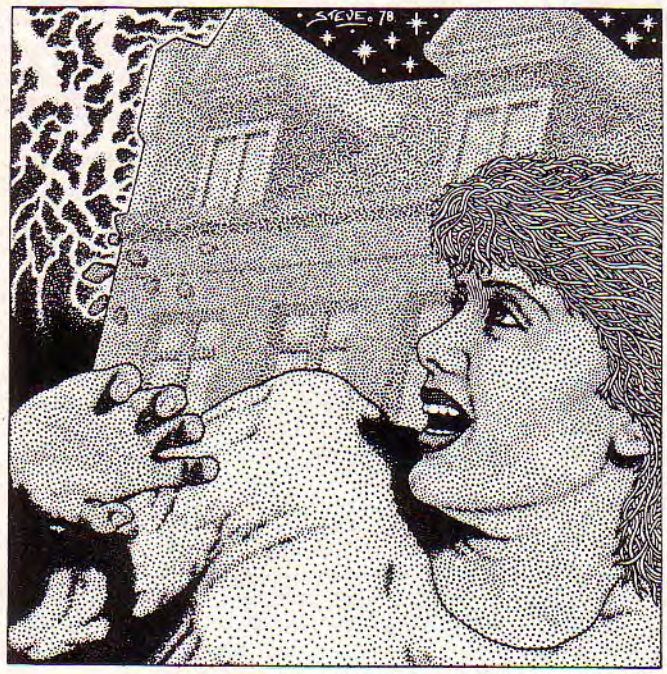
Police Involvement:

If a gunfight develops between the Investigators and the cultists the police will be called to investigate the disturbance. At this point the flow of the adventure is largely in the hands of the Keeper. Martin and his disciples have every right to be in the house — he is a member of the owning family — and mentioning the occult will not impress the police.

Effectively, once the police arrive to investigate a shooting the adventure can be assumed to end, the Investigators having failed in their battle with evil.

And Finally:

If the Investigators explore the house and leave any corpses behind — without killing all the cultists — the bodies will be hidden in the attic for two days after they leave. After two days any bodies will be disposed of via the oven, together with any other incriminating evidence. All signs of the house having been occupied since Alfred and Amelia Besant lived there will have vanished.



Character Roster

Statistics are presented in a standardised format. All characters are defined by standard abilities, and by Armour, Spells available, Skills, Magick Items and Insanities. Weapon statistics are given in the order:

Name / Attack Percentage / Damage / Parry Percentage / Hit Points

An 'x' in place of one of these statistics indicates that it is inapplicable to that weapon.

Unless noted otherwise assume that all characters have a Move of 8.

Howard MARTIN

STR	09	Weapons: Nightstick (A30%/1d6/P45%/15)
CON	13	Armour: Street clothes, no points.
SIZ	13	Insanities: None
INT	15	Skills: Spot Hidden 70%, First Aid 45%,
POW	18	Oratory 55%, Cthulhu Mythos 60%
DEX	05	Spells: Shriving
CHA	15	Magick: Amulet*
EDU	15	
SAN	00	

*Martin wears this beneath his shirt (a successful *Spot Hidden* roll to notice the bulge, unless Martin is searched). The amulet will protect its wearer from any insanity caused by viewing a creature that he or she has summoned. The SAN loss is still incurred.

The Keeper should note Martin's *Oratory* skill if Martin attempts to mislead the Investigators as to his reasons for being in the house.

Martin has $33 on his person.

Quincey DUVAL

STR	16	Weapons: Axe (A45%/1d6+2+1d6/P35%/15)
CON	15	Glove (x/x/P65%/8)
SIZ	12	Armour: 1 point ceremonial robes over normal
INT	12	street clothes.
POW	05	Insanities: None
DEX	15	Skills: Train Bird 80%, Psychoanalysis 15%,
CHA	15	Occult 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 40%
EDU	12	Spells: Summon Byakhee
SAN	02	Magick: Silver Whistle, enchanted to 20% for
		the above spell.

Duval can attack or parry with his axe and parry with his falconer's glove in the same round.

Seward DARBY

STR	13	Weapons: .22 Rifle (A30%/1d6+2/P20%/09)
CON	09	Armour: Ceremonial robes over street clothes,
SIZ	12	no points.
INT	14	Insanities: Doraphobia (fear of fur)
POW	13	Skills: Occult 30%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%
DEX	09	Spells: Bind Byakhee
CHA	03	Magick: None
EDU	08	
SAN	08	

Darby fell into a bonfire when he was seven and was badly burned, hence his low charisma and Martin's excuse of experimenting with a burn healing machine.

Duval and Darby will only consider Summoning and Binding Byakhee if the Investigators are also using powerful spells.

Abraham BRUNO

STR	16	Weapons: Long knife
CON	16	(A55%/1d6+1d6/P35%/9)
SIZ	18	Armour: 1 point ceremonial robes over street
INT	03	clothes
POW	13	Insanities: Paranoia
DEX	09	Skills: Listen 55%, Hide in Shadows 45%
CHA	09	Spells: None
EDU	02	Magick: None
SAN	00	

Bruno is quite mad, convinced that everyone, except Martin, Duval and Darby, is his enemy. In reality, his 'friends' treat him as a joke. Bruno knows little of what is going on, but provides an opportunity for Investigators to try out their *Psychoanalysis* and *Psychology* skills — assuming that Bruno can be sufficiently subdued. He will wait in ambush for any Investigators, then attack in a frenzy.

DARKLAW

STR	07	Weapons: Beak (A50%/1d6/x/x),
POW	17	Claw (A35%/1d4/x/x) 1 beak or 2
CON	13	claws per round
DEX	18	Armour: 2 point feathers
SIZ	07	
MOVE	05	(12 flying)

If Darklaw's attack roll is 01-10 with his beak attack he impales his target. If the roll is 01-05 he also strikes one of his target's eyes. An assailant's attack percentage is halved if Darklaw is airborne, unless a shotgun is used. If the Investigators flee while under attack they must make three successful *Dodge* rolls to reach the street safely; the raven automatically misses if his target makes a successful *Dodge* roll.

Darklaw should be played as an intelligent being, taking an interest in the disciples' actions, especially those of Martin. The raven is a perfectly ordinary creature, but the Investigators should be convinced otherwise.

Credits

Original Design:	Simon Redgrave
Development:	Mike Brunton
Art:	Dave Carson, Stephen Jones
Cartography:	Paul Ruiz

ARE YOU READY FOR THE PBM ADVENTURE CHALLENGE?

Adventures in your own home are one thing. But are you ready for the challenge of national play-by-mail (PBM) adventures, professionally gamemastered with massive computer support?

You can seize control of a gigantic stellar empire (STARWEB) or lead a small, bewildered party exploring a complex alien environment (CRASIMOFF'S WORLD). You can become a mediaeval lord, challenging for the throne of England (FEUDAL LORDS), or a murderous underground military complex, sending robots to destroy your rivals (WARBOID WORLD). You can even design your own species and home planet (STARMASTER) and lead them in exploration and conquest in a universe populated by hundreds of other species (perhaps as carefully-crafted and ambitious as your own).

Each player in a PBM adventure sends his commands to the gamemaster, and receives an individual report showing the results of his own and other players' actions. As you encounter other players, you have infinite scope for alliances, double-dealing and betrayal – there are no holds barred, and success may go not to the most powerful player but to the most cunning negotiator.

FLAGSHIP magazine introduces you to Britain's fastest-growing hobby, with:

- ★ full-colour cover and extensive illustrations
- ★ examples of turn reports
- ★ introduction and analyses for every PBM game run in Britain
- ★ an amazing £10 worth of discounts for new games in *every* issue, offered by gamesmasters to our subscribers.

Every week, thousands of players tear open their envelopes to learn the latest news of the desperate power struggles between their kingdoms, or the savage wars raging across the galaxy. PBM adventure gaming is nerve-wracking; it makes every postal delivery into a balance of hope and fear – but it's also the ultimate adventure experience. You owe it to yourself to give it a try.

Send this form (or write separately if you don't want to cut your IMAGINE™) to FLAGSHIP (Dept IM), PO Box 714, Coleshill, Birmingham . . . and get ready to face the PBM adventure challenge!

YES! I'm ready to try the PBM challenge. Send me my first copy of FLAGSHIP today.
I enclose (delete as appropriate) £6 for 4 issues
£1.75 for a sample issue

(Subscriber guarantee: you can cancel your subscription at a month's notice and receive the unused part refunded if you are in any way dissatisfied)

Name ..... (please print)

Address .....

..... Postcode .....

★ THE FLAGSHIP OF POSTAL ADVENTURES ★

The Imagination Machine The Imagination Machine

COMPUTERS micro COMPUTERS

The Imagination Machine

8 bits good, 16 bits better?

The affordable 16-bit computers, previewed in #7 of IMAGINE magazine, are starting to arrive on the market. What effect will they have on the computer game hobby?

It seems quite likely that they'll create a new 'top-of-the-range' in home micros. This has really been lacking in the past, the only candidates for the position being the **Apple** and possibly the **Atari**. But these are old machines, which have reached only a few percent of computer game players in this country; owners of these computers have been looking around recently for a replacement machine and a 16-bit micro seems the obvious choice.

It looks as if the **Sinclair QL** will be the first to arrive, closely followed by the **Advance 86**. The differences in design between these two computers are interesting; the Advance has standard operating systems and applications packages, and 128k upgradable to 256k or more. Sinclair's machine uses a non-standard Operator System and language, as well as his own Microdrive floppy tape system.

Imposing Standards

Other 16-bit machines due to arrive later in the year are likely to conform to the pattern set by the Advance, offering standard operating systems such as MSDOS and 3.5" disk drives for mass storage. So, will Sinclair succeed in imposing his own standards on the market, by sheer weight of production volume?

The answers seems to depend on the choice of media formats to be supported by the software houses who will supply programs (including games) for the new machines. All the possible formats have disadvantages. Microdrive tapes suffer from unreliability, are expensive and are available only from the sole supplier — Sinclair — who would like to dominate the software market for his computers, having failed to do so in the past. Microfloppy discs are cheap, easily available and reliable, but even a single drive can increase the cost of a system by £300. ROM cartridges are an acceptable way of supplying most types of game, but not all the new machines will accept cartridges without modification, and the cost of production tends to rise linearly with increasing program length. A £10 price tag for a cartridge represents a reasonable profit margin in the case of a 4k arcade game, but is unlikely to cover the cost of putting a 70k interactive graphics-based Adventure into ROM.

Low Expectations

This aspect of the new machines — their ability to hold very big programs in memory — is something new on the British scene and it's not clear what effect it will have. The majority of the games programs available at the moment are quite short, occupying 5k or less. This is partly because owners have in general not been willing to upgrade their equipment by adding disc drives for fast loading, but there are several other reasons. Software houses specialising in machine-code arcade games discovered some time ago that, contrary to expectations, buyers preferred games with fairly simple screen displays and a small number of user controls, rather than more complex games with confusing displays and twenty different commands to remember during play. It seems that computer gamers have fairly low expectations of a new piece of software and there is not a lot of point in providing them with a richer diet than they are used to.

The situation will presumably change with the availability of the new hardware. One of the rules of the computer industry is that coding expands to fill the space available for it to execute in, and there is no reason why things should be different in this case. In practice this will mean that game design will move away from the reaction-game syndrome and towards games with 'plots' and stories, just so that the programmer can work up enough material to fill memory.

Spending between £400 and £650 on a new computer is a big step but, on the whole, it looks as if the 16-bit machine will be successful at the top end of the home market, and that the software developed on them will become the standard by which games software in general is judged. If so, the next question is: which machine to buy?

To buy or not to buy?

Bear in mind the relative difficulty of developing games on the different computers. BASIC programming is comparatively quick and painless, but Sinclair's machine does not include a BASIC compiler, which is a great mistake and rather knocks on the head the image of the machine as a business computer. Most Assembly-language programmers, having learnt to write for the 8080 or 6502, are notoriously loath to abandon these processors; there are only a few competent 68000 and 8086 programmers at the moment, and, of course, they aren't all game designers.

So it might be advisable to wait for a while after the machines become generally available, to judge the quality of the software that is produced for them and how much it's going to cost to load it. But these computers certainly offer an exciting opportunity for anyone who has wanted to design complex games, and has been put off in the past by the tedious necessity of compacting his code so as to be able to cram it into a restricted amount of memory.

Mike Costello

If you enjoyed this article, watch out next issue for ***The Imagination Machine****, a monthly feature with news, comment and reviews for micro gamers.*

MORRIS MEETS THE BIKERS

In **Morris Meets the Bikers** we start out at the tip of a multi-storey car park. We have to manoeuvre our car, using the neatly designed lifts, down to the exit at the bottom. On our way through the car park, we encounter wheel clamps which impede our progress, and tin-tacks which rather cleverly slow us down. We also have to avoid the fearsome Bikers,as a collision with any one of them is fatal. We have five lives, however, and the bikers can be blasted out of the way by using the horn. If all this is not enough, we also have to maintain our fuel supply and beware of a build-up of carbon monoxide.

As well as keeping out of trouble, we have to collect coins, some of which are needed to pay parking fees, others, to escape through the exit. Points are also awarded for every Biker that is blasted into oblivion. After passing through the exit we can proceed to the next sheet, and herein lies the game's main failing: each sheet is just a repeat of the above process. There are nine sheets in all and it tends to become very boring very soon, with no feeling of game development.

The graphics, use of colour and sound, in fact the mechanics of the game, are good. The various characters move easily and realistically. An excellent feature is the facility to pre-select which keys to use in the absence of a Kempston joystick. If one so wishes, the keys can be changed after each game. Many other games would be improved by this idea. The tape loaded without trouble each time, and the cassette is quite attractively packaged. As an additional bonus, there is also a pop song on the reverse side, but perhaps the less I say about that the better.

The game fails to hold one's interest, however, because there is no incentive to progress through the successive stages. To amass points, all one really needs to do is to stay put and blast away at the Bikers, which is not a very exciting pursuit. The basic idea is a good one; perhaps a different scoring system would make a rather ordinary game into something special, and give it some of the addictiveness of the classics. As it stands I do not feel that it is good value for money.

Bill Hoare

Morris Meets the Bikers *for the Spectrum is from Automata UK of 27 Highland Rd, Portsmouth, Hants. Price £6.*

SPACE ISLAND

Micro adventures are constantly improving. Though there are none yet which really rival tabletop fantasy, they do have their own attractions, providing some features which are difficult to produce in conventional FRP. **Space Island** uses two of these — graphics and real time. This makes it sound more like an arcade video game than an adventure; it has some of those features, but that does not necessarily make it a bad adventure. The graphic display is an attractive map of three islands peppered with almost imperceptible black dots which you need a colour display to see properly. Each dot is an 'encounter area' and players guide their android (represented as a cross-hair sight) to any of the dots. On arrival, the item at that location is revealed. Some of these remain in the same location for each game, but most are randomly redistributed each time it is played.

The arcade element comes while guiding the android. It is very difficult to align the cross-hair with the dot and if you do not get it right the android carries on past and usually wanders into the sea and drowns. He only pauses when he reaches one of these 'locations of known interest'. Otherwise he is constantly moving, which means the player must constantly guide him. It takes four or five plays to achieve some skill with this, using the normal cursor keys. A joystick would be better but no option is given.

So this would be a pretty ordinary movement game without the adventure component. As usual, the android has to achieve a major task, namely, *'find the cause of the dangerous time distortion around Zyro* (the planet on which the game is set), *disable it and return to Earth'*. To do this various objects must be located and problems solved in traditional fashion. On arrival at an object the arcade game pauses, allowing you to try out your vocabulary. 19 commands are provided. They can only be used during the 'pause' mode of the game. The instructions do not tell you this, so it took two or three games to learn. Effectively, most commands are suitable for just one or two events, with the others being irrelevant at that point.

Each command is a single key entry. The advantage of this is speed, which clearly fits with the philosophy of the game — trying to combine the best of video and adventure games — but its drawback is that creative and imaginative solutions are prevented. So, for many FRP players, much of the fun is lost.

A major drawback of the game as supplied is that these commands are only listed at the appropriate moment of play, not in the supporting documentation. Because some are rather unusual, such as Quiet, Touch and Consume, they are difficult to remember and it is certainly tedious to step through a special part of the program to find out what could be referred to immediately.

As an adventure it is reasonably interesting with some imaginative happenings, which usually end in sudden death. But most of the interest comes from trying to keep your android alive, as he needs food, drink and rest and you do not know in advance which of the dots represents which. Meanwhile, the volcano on the main island periodically erupts and obscures some of the dots. Naturally there are the usual tempting but poisoned foods, and movement around the islands is so difficult that it takes many games to discover all the possible events. So the game is really a maze adventure without the maze, unlikely to induce heart attacks due to its speed. It offers a novel approach to adventuring, where the priorities of the android are closer to those of a real adventurer than in many FRP games. While not compulsive, it is certainly worth playing and makes a reasonable compromise between two types of play.

Noel Williams

Space Island *(£6.95) for the ZX Spectrum comes from Terminal Software, 28 Church Lane, Prestwich, Manchester.*

COMPETITION RESULTS

The Philosopher's Stone: The Thief

That's more like it — over 60 entries to part 3 of the competition, including a few from such places as New Zealand, Australia, Canada and West Germany.

People found this one difficult in the main because of the nautical signals, which are not commonly known. Also, as three entrants pointed out, some of the flags were inverted, making for confusion between 'L' and 'U' (see **3**). Jem Clarke even commented, *'There seems to exist some confusion as to exactly* ***which*** *flag code is being used'*, and *'The best sense comes from use of the International Signal Flag Code'* rather than the Naval signals indicated in the message of the three ships (**d**). We allowed for this when marking, but perhaps predictably, the people who noticed these ambiguities were also more adept at finding obscure messages, and in fact $^2/_3$ of the entrants got the main three answers correct. There is no ambiguity this month!

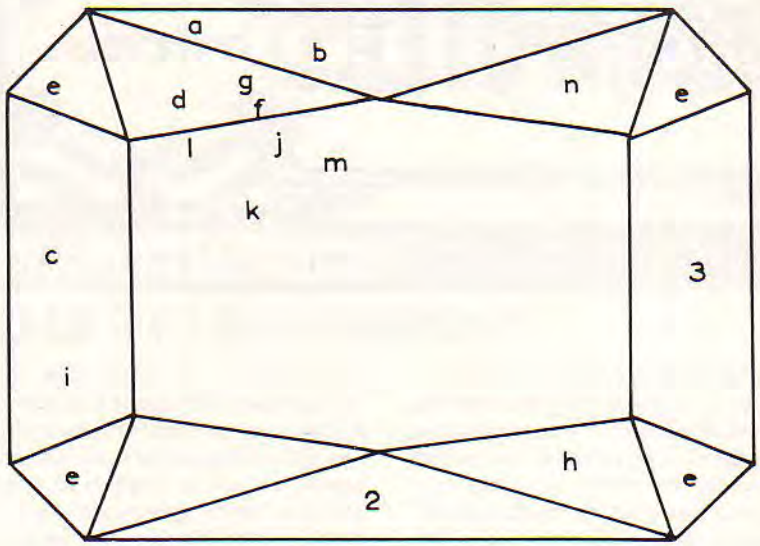
There are about a dozen people noticeably in the running for the overall prize — they probably have a fair idea of who they are; but **everyone** should have a go at part 4, regardless of this. One entrant commented that it didn't seem worth entering part 2 unless all the puzzles had been solved, after the high standard of entries to part 1 — but nothing ventured...

No-one managed to get all the messages we were looking for, but still the tie-breaker had to be invoked to decide between the four finalists. The winner, with an interpretation of the 'Key' that attracted special notice from Anne, is **Ian Harding** of Cambridge. The three entrants whom he just pipped to the post were: **Richard Artley**, also of Cambridge; **J R Garnett** of Hitchin (formerly of Harrow); and **C A Nelson** of Harrow. There seem to be pockets of 'RPGenius' in the country, where the muse of puzzle-solving looks particularly kindly on TSR disciples.

Anyway, very well done to all four winners, and to those who didn't quite make it but are still among the overall leaders, and to all the others who made a very good attempt — keep it up!

1. You could deduce the nature of the stolen paper most easily if you noticed the textual reference, *'it was something to do with the paired numbers and letters...'*. Pairs of numbers and letters are scattered all over the picture, and if these are placed in numerical order, the letters spell **MAP OF CATACOMBS**. Simple!

2. The 'Key' sought by the thief was more difficult to identify. The name of the ship, **BINARY STAR** (in incomplete letters — **a**) gives a clue to the binary code on the



ship's side (**b**) where numbers correspond directly to letters — ie I = A, IO = 2 = B, etc — which produces the message:
THE RED SUITS COUNT THIRTEEN, SO TOO THE BLACKS. THE TOTAL TWENTY-SIX SPELL OUT OUR QUEST AND IF WITH KNOWLEDGE GAINED YOU NOW TURN BACK, ALSO THE ZODIAC YOU LAY TO REST.
This indicates that the red cards represent the first half of the alphabet, the black the second half; and refers back to part 2 of the competition, where an extra 'zodiac' sign made 13 symbols which were used in black and white to make a total 26. In part 3 the cards spelt out, in the text — **seek key**; and in the picture, — **I SEEK THE KEY OF CASTILION**.

3. The thief's name caused problems, for reasons already indicated. The first pointer clue was on the thief's cloak (**c**). If you group the letters according to their orientation, they make anagrams from which can be derived: **MY NAME FLIES HIGH FOR ALL TO SEE**. Another pointer can be found by taking one letter in turn from each of the three name plates in the order indicated; thus: **YES TRY USING NAVAL SIGNALS** (**d**). The signals should spell out **MY NAME IS FLY MERRIEL**, but we accepted 'Fuy Merrieu'.

4. Other messages: **a, b, c, d** above, and:

e. Numbers on the facing sides of the dice should spell out **SNAKES EYES**. Actually the letters were S, N, A, K, E, S, E, Y, E, Y — so we accepted all reasonable anagrams, the most common being **SEE ANY KEYS?**. We forgave 'Snakes / Aye aye' too. Aren't we generous?!

f. The portholes of 'ERSG VIA 2' read **HI** in binary.

g. The flag in the same picture gives a message something like **'Stop, I have something important to communicate'**

h. Three flags elsewhere in the puzzle indicated: **'Keep clear of me — I am manoeuvring with difficulty', 'I require assistance'** and the reply **'No'**

i. The border of the cloak reads **WHY DON'T YOU TAKE UP A NICE CONSTRUCTIVE HOBBY LIKE KNITTING**

j. The flag in the main picture indicates **'I am going to send a message by semaphore'** which alerts you to...

k. The characters on the doorway which say **NOT HERE BUT LOOK CLOSELY AT THE MAGICIAN PICTURE** — the 'E' obscured by the thief's head (No, Gillian, *not* this month's "deliberat mistak"!).

l. Incomplete letters above the doorway say **GO AWAY**.

m. To the right of the door was a vertical message with the vowels left out. Anne intended this to read **NO READER, TO FIND THE HERO'S NAME YOU MUST TRY HARDER — TOUGH!**, but far more people interpreted it as 'In order to find...' which is of course quite as 'correct'.

n. On the pendant, taking the arrows longest first (A at the top): **NOT HERE**.

And the winning **tie-breaker:**
The Key is not a key in the ordinary sense, but a Quay: the Quay of Castilion. When the ancient Sea Lords were great, they buried their dead at sea by scuttling treasure-laden funeral boats. The Lord Castilion was buried by treachery, his sister destroying his laden funeral boat in harbour with burning oil. To avert the curse of a shallow sea burial, the priests raised the sea level, rebuilding the city above the old, creating flooded catacombs leading to all the old, submerged jetties including the Quay of Castilion. His sister was cursed to become a lonely mermaid.

The Philosopher's Stone

by Anne Hamill

A prize competition based on the AD&D™ and D&D® games

The Philosopher's Stone. Restless, changeful, it was sought by those who wished to step sideways out of time to where the Stone splayed out events of other times, other worlds. Like all oracles, the meaning of the events displayed was often obscure. But an adept, reading the story, looking deep into the picture overleaf might see more than mere scattered images in the facets of the Stone....

The Cleric

When I came into the inn, he was sitting looking out of the window, down to where the ships were drawn up. He was as still as if he were asleep or dead; I hoped the former, although the pockets of dead men are often looser than those of the living. I sat down alongside him.

'You want information,' I told his profile.

His eyes at least could move.

'Ah,' he said. I hate that kind, the kind that let you talk until you put your foot in it.

'An area of rocks and whirlpools, where dead hands have been found floating, welded permanently to golden objects disturbing the design...' I paused delicately, and glanced at the rough cloth he wore. Some of these orders seem to take a positive delight in clothing their subscribers in rags. Coffers full of golden objects, every one. 'If one were, perhaps, to have a map...' I hinted.

His hand came out as if in a gesture of good fellowship, and I started to smile, but it kept on closing on my shoulder until I thought the thumb and forefinger would meet.

'Nnngh!' I said. Or something like that.

'One would,' he said in a deep cultivated voice which had no business coming from the throat of such a barbarian, 'doubtless be pleased to show it to one pledged to rid such a place of evils.'

'But of course,' I agreed immediately, reaching – carefully – for the piece of paper I carried. I have in the past found it advantageous to be generous in dealing with Brothers. If you can't bargain with them, you can sometimes make them feel guilty, which can be as good; the pain, of course, being irrelevant to such a business decision.

He took it absentmindedly and tucked it in his shirt as if he owned it, still looking out the window.

'The fools are putting the cogsail up wrongly,' he muttered. 'It must be set just right...'

He let go of my shoulder, for which I was truly thankful. I extended my hand insinuatingly.

'Er, reverend,' I smiled. 'The map? Of course – a good cause – but a man has to live, you know, and there may be others after you who'll need – '

He dug in his purse impatiently and, as he left, tossed me something from it that glittered and spun in the air.

I opened my hand to discover its worth; it had brought in quite a bit, that map, over the years. Copper! I dashed to the door.

'Curse you, you damned ungrateful – ' I began to shout, but at that same moment I had a vivid image of winged shrieking beasts above sharp metal, and the lurid glow of fire on raging water; then it was gone, and there was just the harbour and the disappearing back of the man who'd stolen my map. I hoped he wouldn't make it. I sniffed and looked at the copper piece with resignation. Oh well. I could always draw another one.

Can you solve the mysteries of the Philosopher's Stone?

The picture of the Stone overleaf is the last in a series of four pictures which have appeared quarterly, showing events in the careers of a fighter, magic user, thief and cleric. At the top of this page you can read the story of how the cleric obtained a map which would enable him to meet the Adversary, and the picture illustrates this.

However, not all is clearly stated. In order to enter this month's prize competition you must list the answers to as many of the following puzzles as you are able to decipher and explain how you decoded them, then complete the tie-breaker:

1. **What is the cleric's name?**
2. **What is his alignment?**
3. **What is the name of the Adversary?**
4. **List any other messages you found.**
5. **(tie-breaker) Describe the role of the narrator and the nature of the Adversary's power (in not more than 150 words).**

The winner will be the person who has solved problems **1**, **2** and **3**, and the greatest number of the other messages (**4**). In the event of a tie, the contestant who offers the most convincing analysis of the narrator and the Adversary (**5**) will be awarded the prize.

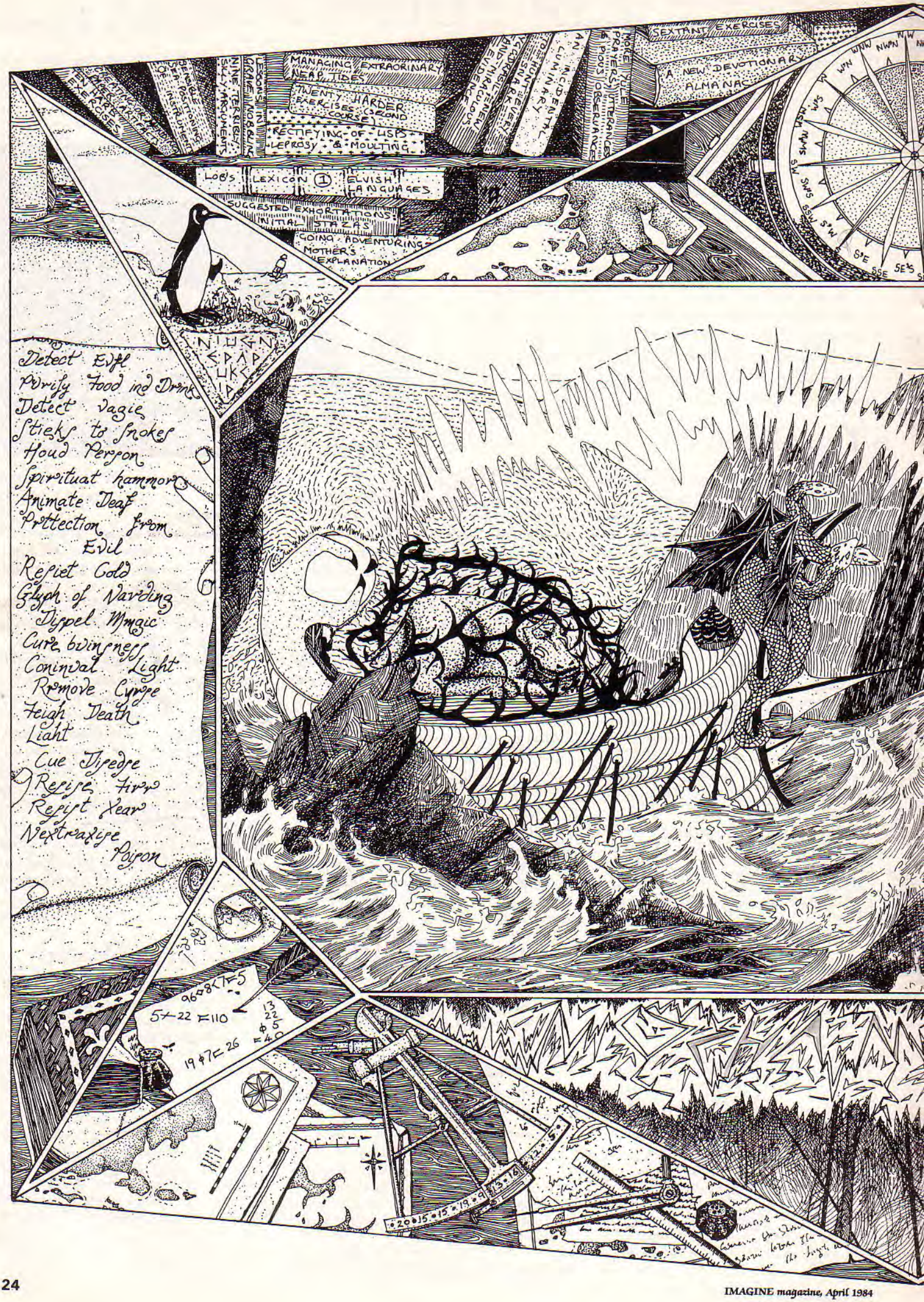
All entries should reach **IMAGINE™** magazine by **May 7th 1984**.

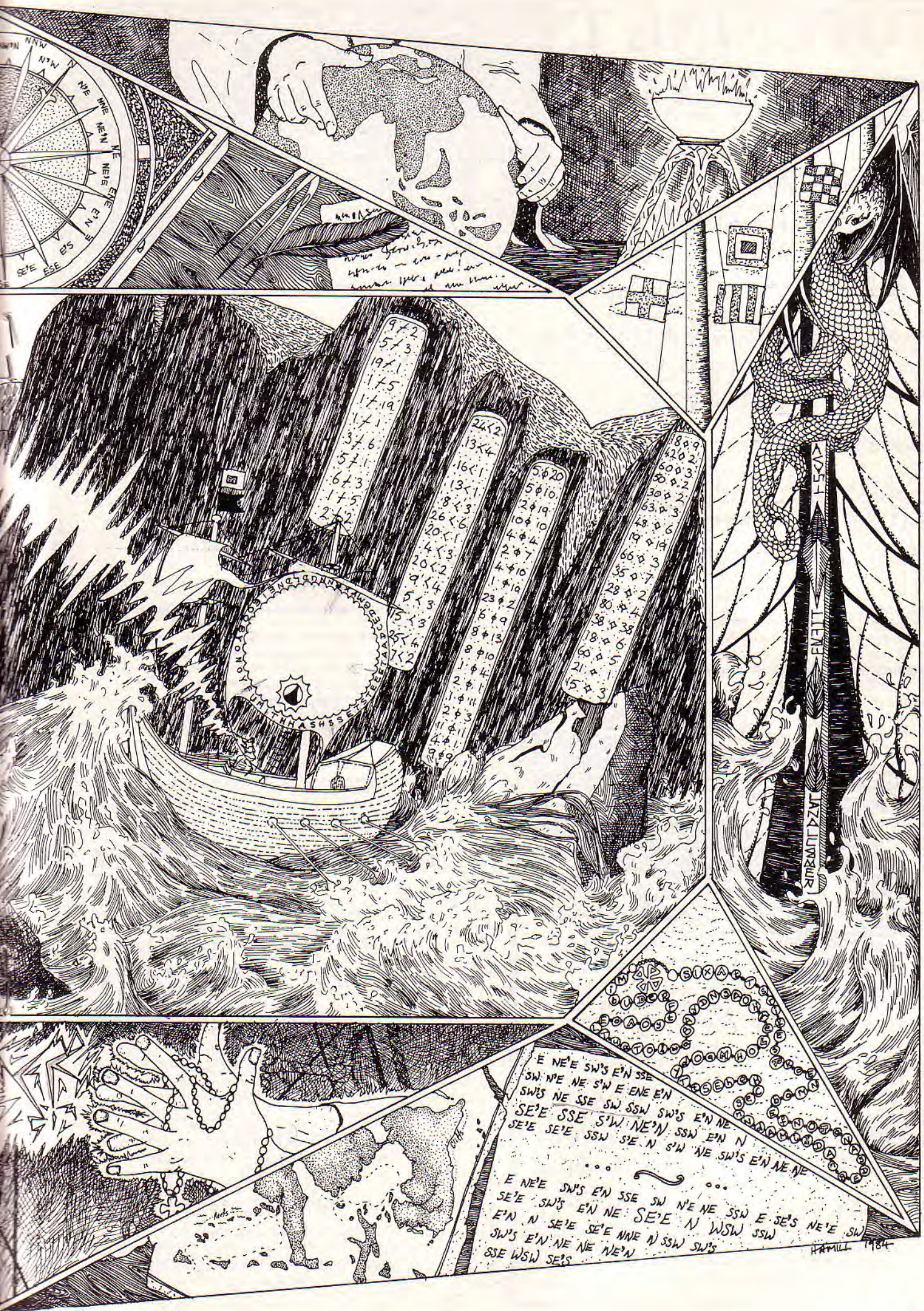
The winner will receive a voucher redeemable through TSR UK Ltd for goods to the value of £40. There will be three runner-up prizes of £10 each. These vouchers can be exchanged for any products in the TSR or SPI® range.

In addition to these prizes, **an original picture by Anne Hamill** based on the Philosopher's Stone competition will be awarded to the person who has solved most clues over all four pictures.

The results will be published in the July issue of the magazine, #16. Winners will be notified by post.

The decision of the publisher will be final.


MANAGING EXTRAORDINARY NEAP TIDES
TWENTY HARDER EXERCISES (SECOND COURSE)
RECTIFYING OF USPS + LEPROSY + & MOULTING
LOB'S LEXICON (1) ELVISH LANGUAGES
SUGGESTED EXHORTATIONS
INITIAL STAGES
COING ADVENTURING
MOTHER'S EXPLANATION
SEXTANT EXERCISES
A NEW DEVOTIONARY ALMANAC
Detect Evil
Purify Food and Drink
Detect Magic
Sticks to Snakes
Hold Person
Spiritual Hammer
Animate Dead
Protection from Evil
Resist Cold
Glyph of Warding
Dispel Magic
Cure Blindness
Continual Light
Remove Curse
Feign Death
Light
Cure Disease
Resist Fire
Resist Lightning
Neutralize Poison


E NE'E SW'S E'N SSE
SW N'E NE S'W E ENE E'N
SW'S NE SSE SW SSW SW'S E'N NE
SE'E SSE S'W NE'N SSW E'N N
SE'E SE'E SSW S'E N S'W NE SW'S E'N NE NE
E NE'E SW'S E'N SSE SW N'E NE SSW E SE'S NE'E SW
SE'E SW'S E'N NE SE'E N WSW SSW
E'N N SE'E SE'E NNE N SSW SW'S
SW'S E'N NE NE NE'N
SSE WSW SE'S
HAMILL 1984

OPENING IN EARLY APRIL

THE CASTLE DUNGEON
IN BEDFORD FOR
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS
IMAGINE Magazine

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS
adventure games

Traveller, Runequest and many others

Telephone or call in and talk to
MICK NOBLE at the Dungeon
The Castle Print and Copy Bureau
108a Castle Road
Bedford — Tel (0234) 211978/57353

BLACK DONALD'S
GAMES SHOP
3 Waverley Place
Aberdeen AB1 1XH
Tel. 0224-643740
FOR GAMERS
NORTH OF
INCHTUTHIL

Stockists of the latest 'Micro users' software:-
Spectrum
Commodore 64
Dragon
BBC

ZAP!

45 BARLOW MOOR ROAD, DIDSBURY
MANCHESTER M20 0TW
Tel. 061 - 434 5390

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES AND AIDS, MINIATURES, BOARD GAMES, FANTASY, SCIENCE FICTION COMICS, MODELS, TOYS, POSTERS, T-SHIRTS, BADGES, POSTCARDS, CARDS.....

☆ HOLOGRAM EXHIBITION! ☆

Buses direct from Manchester (42, 45, 46, 157) and Stockport (306, 316, 370)

Interzone

the magazine of imaginative fiction

catch up with
BARRINGTON BAYLEY
RICHARD COWPER
M. JOHN HARRISON
MICHAEL MOORCOCK
JOHN SLADEK

★ discover new writers, new artists ★

you won't find **Interzone**
in your local newsagent —
but you will find it
appearing through your letterbox
four times a year if you send £5 to

INTERZONE
124 Osborne Road, Brighton BN1 6LU

single issues and back numbers —
£1.50 inc p&p

SOLSTICE AT CASTLE FALKENS

by

Chris Felton

An AD&D™ Adventure for 5-9 players

This scenario is for a Dungeon Master and five to nine players, ideally eight. Characters are provided at the end of the text, and these should be used instead of any personal characters belonging to the players.

If you intend playing in this mini-module stop reading here. The rest of the information is for the DM alone.

DM's Background

Players should each be given one of the character summaries several days before the game starts. This will allow them to familiarise themselves with the character abilities and develop an extended personality for the character. They should be told not to discuss their characters with other players.

Most communication during the game will probably be in the form of notes to the DM as characters sneak around dark corridors, watch through peepholes and eavesdrop on each others' plotting. Be careful that characters with an ESP ability do not have an undue advantage: ESP reveals only surface thoughts, not underlying guilts and suspicions. Most characters (except Mara and Tarn) are politically aware enough to guard their thoughts in case their liege-lords are 'listening'.

The Plot

Falkensford Village is a small market town, overshadowed by Castle Falkens, moorlands and deep forests.

Winter Solstice at Castle Falkens is one of the major festivals of the year. Every year Baron Falkens invites the most prominent landowners, merchants and lesser nobility to attend the Solstice celebrations at the Castle. For five days the Castle rings with the sounds of merry-making.

This year six of those invited have accepted, and two have brought their wards in the hope of making advantageous marriages. It is these six persons, and the two wards, that the players will control.

The First Day of Solstice passed peacefully enough, but rather boisterously, with an open-air feast held in the castle courtyard. The entire population of Falkensford was invited to one of the few occasions on which they are allowed inside the walls.

The Second Day of Solstice was much quieter, with songs and chants in the castle chapel for most of the daylight hours. Only the property owners of Falkensford and the Baron's guests were invited to attend, although many did not bother to do so. After the last of Falkensford citizens had left, huddled inside their cloaks in the cold light of the full moon, the Baron and his guests sat down to a private feast in the Great Hall. As they dined the gates of Castle Falkens were closed, shutting out the dark night, and shutting in the secrets of those within.

The Third Day of Solstice dawned under a veil of mist — for all but one of the Castle's inhabitants. A castle stableboy was found horribly murdered in the courtyard.

It is at this point that the scenario commences. The castle gates have been closed all night; the murderer is still within the walls. One of the Baron's staff, the Baron or one of the guests is a vicious killer, and the killer must be found soon — before the villagers find out or before another death...

In actual fact, Baron Falkens knows exactly what has happened. His uncle, Dwari Falkens is the killer, but the Baron has no wish to have anyone know about Dwari, who is the rightful Baron and completely insane. The Baron has also been experimenting and has created a creature, a type of flesh golem — another thing that the superstitious villagers and peasantry should never find out.

Each of the characters has the same basic aim: to guard their own secret and either find the killer or lay suspicion elsewhere.

Castle Falkens

The curtain wall of the castle is 25 feet high, made of smooth faced stone which is usually slippery due to the persistent mists and fog which surround the castle every night. In places the outer surface is rather cracked, thanks to the neglect of recent years. It has four high square towers and a fortified gatehouse.

The barracks for 120 troops, the chapel, the gatehouse and towers have not been in regular use since the Falken's family lost many of their holdings and stopped keeping expensive household troops. All the buildings are well maintained, and the chapel is used on special occasions by the priest who lives in Falkensford. The stables are still used, and are adequate for 30 horses. Above the stables sleep the four (now three) stableboys.

The key to the castle keep is given as a brief list of the rooms, along with any significant contents. The DM should feel free to invent any other items of interest, furnishings etc.

1. Library and treasure vault. The Baron's personal library of alchemical tomes and spell books and his personal cash reserve worth 2463gp. The money is locked in a chest and the Baron keeps the key.

2. Cells for involuntary experimentees. Currently empty while the Baron has guests.

3. Alchemical laboratory. Full of glass tubing, bottles and beakers. There is a 10% chance that any substance is poisonous. The Baron will not willingly permit any of his guests to enter here, and keeps it locked. The key is kept in a drawer in his bedroom.

4. Herb store. Contains other experiment materials that are perishable.

5. Pantry. The castle's main food store, with enough in stock to feed the castle for the week.

6. Kitchen. A large, locked cupboard contains the castle's supply of herbs, spices and herb teas. The cook has the key.

7. Wine cellar. Always kept locked, the Baron and Igor have keys. All the wine is of moderate quality, save for the Baron's personal stock, which is excellent. One particularly strong red wine is traditionally only served to those the Baron is about to execute or use for experimental purposes. The cork has the legend 'Unto Oblivion' written upon it.

8. Fuel cellar.

9. Carpentry workshops. Currently occupied by a broken rack which is being reworked into an experiment bench, and a mouldering scaffold built in the time of the Baron's grandfather for the execution of horse thieves.

10. Toilets.

11. Igor's bedroom. Formerly the butler's room, it has become squalid since Igor occupied it. It has the same furnishings as all the other bedrooms of the keep: a four-poster bed, two armchairs in front of the fire, four upright chairs, two bedside tables and a chest for clothing.

12. Priesthole. A small bed, a candlestick and a month's supply of iron rations are the room's only furnishings. The secret trapdoor in the floor leads down to a passageway which runs the length of the curtain wall and emerges in the Chapel sacristy.

13. Dormitory. The female staff (two cooks, four waitresses/assistant cooks, and four chambermaids) live here. Normally the Baron has only one cook and one chambermaid, the others are hired for the Winter Solstice from Falkensford. They are all non-adventuring folk (see **DMG** p88, 'Typical Inhabitants').

14. Dormitory. The living area for the four footmen the Baron has hired for the duration of the Winter Solstice. Again, the DM should see **DMG** p88. The dormitory is normally empty.

15. The Dungeon. There are 26 sets of manacles set into the walls, and the rack in the centre of the room has torturer's implements laid out upon it. They are all greased to prevent rust, but the chamber has not been used for many years.

16. Great Hall. The finest room in the building, the great hall is the Baron's public court and is decorated accordingly. Animal head trophies and displays of weapons hang from the walls. A portrait of the first Baron Falkens hangs above the fireplace.

17. Guest bedroom, used by Master Merchant Verno Nimon. The furnishings are the same as those in Igor's room, but in far better condition.

'**A**' is a small room containing the control mechanism of the portcullis. It is locked — the Baron and Igor have keys.

18. Smoking Lounge. A small, private chamber, comfortably furnished to seat eight.

19. Lounge. A ladies' withdrawing room, used while male guests are in the smoking lounge. This room will also comfortably seat eight.

20. Sewing room.

21. Bedroom. Unoccupied at present.

22. Dressing rooms. Each contains a large walk-in cupboard, and a large dummy on which to hang clothes.

23. The Baron's bedroom. The key to the alchemical laboratory is kept in the top left hand drawer of an ornate desk beside the bed.

24. Toilets.

25. The Baron's study. The books and scrolls in here relate to the Baron's business interests, investments and general alchemy. They give no clues as to the direction his researches have taken (ie constructing his 'creature').

26. The Creature's room. Formerly the armoury, this room is now kept locked at all times (the Baron and Igor have keys). In the SW corner is the drawbridge control mechanism. Many of the old armoury fittings remain on the walls, perhaps giving this room the appearance of a torture chamber.

27. Cloak room. This entrance building has been built onto the drawbridge as a weak wooden construction. In an emergency it can be smashed off to allow the drawbridge to rise.

28. Minstrel's gallery, overlooking the Great Hall. The gallery is used as a store for sheet music and a variety of musical instruments — crumhorns, tabors, a lyre, lutes, timbrels, panpipes, etc.

29. Bedroom, used by Tarn Torsil.

30. Bedroom, used by Groff Torsil.

31. Bedroom, used by Garth Nustar.

32. Bedroom, used by Countess Messalina Hunyadi.

33. Bedroom, used by Mara Forthill.

34. Bedroom, used by Master Merchant Dina Fissen. A door in the dressing room leads to the dressing room attached to Mara's bedroom, as this used to be the master suite.

35. Bedroom, used by Lady Sersi Cordos.

36. Maid's bedroom, unused at present.

37. Tower rooms, normally kept locked at all times (the Baron and Igor have keys). The towers each have a small spiral staircase with a clockwise rise, so they may be defended against attackers decending from the battlements. Above the entrance room on the second floor is another small room used as a subsidiary armoury, and then a flat roof surrounded by a crenellated wall.

38. Dwari's prison. In the subsidiary armoury of the NW tower Dwari Falkens is held prisoner, chained to one wall, in conditions of terrible squalor. The walls show the marks of his considerable struggles. In one corner, faded almost to invisibility, is a pitiful message, scrawled when he was a young man: 'Help.... Dwari.... Falkens....'

Castle Falkens has six **secret passages**:

a. Room 4 (the Herb store) to Room 14 (Dormitory).
b. Room 12 (the Priesthole) to the Chapel sacristy.
c. Room 38 (the NW tower) to Room 25 (the Baron's Study) past the peepholes in 17, 18 and 19 (which can be seen through by climbing ladders).
d. Room 23 (the Baron's bedroom), via Room 25 to Room 37 (the SE tower).
e. Room 23 to the Great Hall wall on the second floor.
f. The second floor passage around rooms 22, 29, 30, 34 and 36.

Anyone moving inside a secret passage will be heard 15% of the time by anyone in the adjacent room. Anyone trying (but failing) to move silently will be heard 5% of the time. Assume that everyone has a 9% chance of moving silently, unless noted otherwise.

Non-Player Characters

Baron Falkens: S 11; I 15; W 16; C 9; D 12; Ch 16; 4th level Lawful Neutral Magic-user; AC 10; hp 10; Usual spells memorised: **Friends, Protection from Evil, Shield, Forget, Levitate**; Weapon: **dagger +2.**

The following spells may be found in the Baron's spell books (in addition to those listed above): **charm person, comprehend languages, detect magic, find familiar, light, mending, message, read magic, unseen servant, write, detect invisibility, fool's gold, scare, mirror image, pyrotechnics.**

Baron Falkens is the ninth to bear the title and the owner of Castle Falkens and its surrounding lands, although he is more interested in his alchemy than the estates. He has specialized in researching the processes of life, and to this end his secret laboratory is the scene of experiments upon bodies purchased from the Thieves Guild and local grave robbers. His experiments have resulted in 'Life' of a sort — the Creature.

Igor: S 14; I 11; W 12; C 16; D 9; Ch 4; 4th level Dwarf Lawful Neutral Fighter; AC 10; hp 36; Weapon: blackjack (D1-3).

Igor's father was the servant of the present Baron's grandfather when Dwari Falkens was born. In his rage at the birth, the then Baron slew Igor's father and beat Igor so badly that he grew up into a twisted, hunchbacked, beardless dwarf. Later, he regretted this and took Igor in as his servant, a postion that he has held under three Barons.

Dwari Falkens: S 11; I 10; W 4; C 16; D 12; Ch 6; 4th level male human Neutral Evil Fighter; AC 10; hp 31; Weapons: bare hands and teeth (1-2/1-2/1)

Dwari is the eldest son of the present Baron's grandfather and grandmother, and hence the rightful Baron. Dwari's father (the seventh Baron) was convinced that Dwari was someone else's child (he believed that Igor's father was probably Dwari's father as well), although Dwari was his son.

As an embarrassment to the family, Dwari was imprisoned in the Northwest tower of the castle, which has driven him insane and stripped him of all humanity. Dwari manages to break out of the tower occasionally, and tries to kill anyone he meets. It is Dwari who killed the stableboy, but he was caught by Igor as he was feasting on the body.

The Creature: S 18/00; I 3; W 3; C 15; D 10; Ch 13; Half strength Neutral flesh golem; AC 9 (need silver or magical weapons to hit); hp 20; Weapons: bare hands (1-8/1-8); Size Large; Resists spells (but not turning attempts) as though Undead.

The creature is the Baron's most successful experiment to date. Although not aggressive, this intelligent (well, almost) 'golem' will defend itself if attacked. If an approaching lynch mob from the village is spotted, Igor will bring the creature out of its room to a point where the Creature has no choice but to defend itself against the mob.

The Phantom: Castle Falkens is, of course; haunted. The resident spirit is a headless drummer boy in archaic uniform. At odd intervals throughout the night of the Winter Solstice, when the powers of darkness are at their height, he appears in the Castle, plays his drum for 2-8 rounds, and vanishes. This is all the Phantom does, but anyone seeing him must save vs Spells (wisdom bonuses apply, but magic resistance does not) or flee in panic for 2-12 rounds.

The Phantom has a 5% chance of appearing per turn on Solstice night (the night of the Third Day of Solstice), in a random location within Castle Falkens (D20+15 gives the room number of his appearance). The night after Solstice the Phantom will appear in Countess Hunyadi's bedroom at 4.50am. Next night he will not appear, thereafter there is a 5% chance per night of the Phantom appearing.

The Changeling: S 15; I 14; W 14; C 13; D 16; Ch 18; 6th level Chaotic Evil male Assassin; AC 4; hp 26; Weapon: **longsword +2**; Other Magic Items: **leather armour +2**; **periapt of wound closure**; 2 jars of **Keoghtom's Ointment**; a **potion of extra-healing** and a **potion of polymorph self**.

The Changeling is actually Altis Nustar, twin brother of Garth Nustar, and as evil as his brother is good. Worried that one day his brother would hunt him down, Altis spread a rumour that he had been executed. Now he has decided that it is time to ruin his brother's reputation. He has had clothes made that are a duplicate of those worn by Garth, save that they can be worn over leather armour. He has previously been to Castle Falkens in the guise of Garth, and discovered the secret passage (f) around the bedrooms. Baron Falkens has no knowledge of his existence.

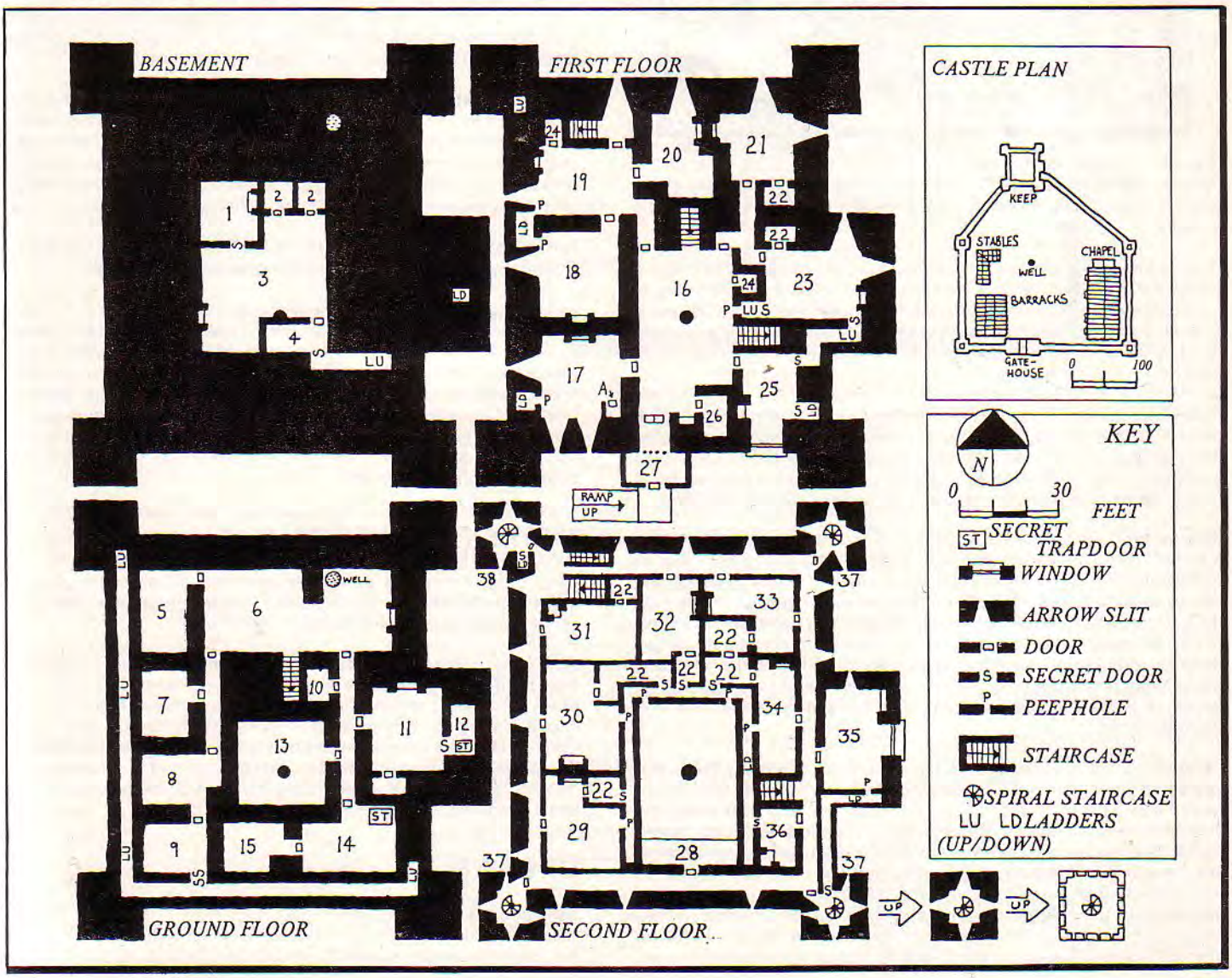
The Falkensford Villagers: The villagers are simple folk (see **DMG** p88), deeply superstitious and fearful of the supernatural. About 200-300 of the villagers will form a lynch mob and descend upon the castle if the circumstances of the stableboy's murder become general knowledge (or if another murder is committed). Falkensford had trouble from a werewolf several years ago, so silver weapons will be brought out, and anyone vaguely lupine (a wolf, Verno in were-form, or Dwari) will be attacked. The villagers will stop fearfully if confronted by anything beyond their comprehension (the Creature, a Succubus, a bat changing into human form, etc) and run in blind panic if they see the Phantom.

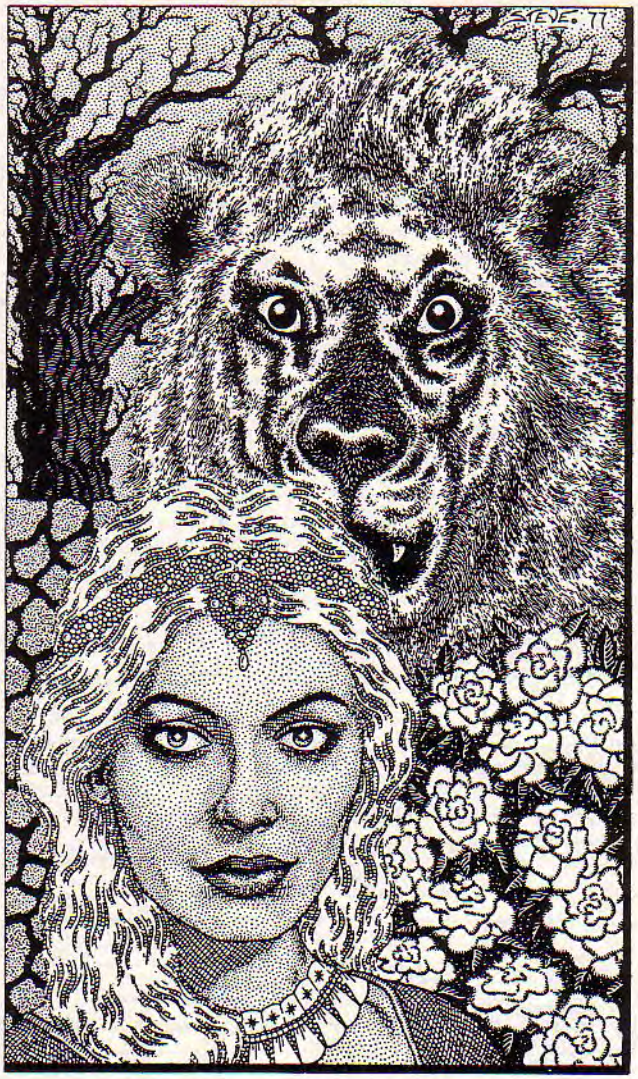
Player Characters

Garth Nustar: S 15; I 14; W 14; C 13; D 16; Ch 18; 6th level Lawful Good human male Fighter; AC 8 (AC-1 in armour); hp 43; weapon **longsword+3**; Other magic Items: 'Shalqua' a **battleaxe+2** which flies to his hand when called, **shortsword+1** (**+4** vs reptiles), **ring of fire resistance**, **rod of cancellation**, **platemail+1**.

Although he has brought his suit of armour with him, Garth considers it impolite to wear it unless he is expecting trouble.

Garth was a crusading paladin for many years, until an accident on the battlefield when he rode down a young woman camp follower. His ensuing remorse brought a loss of his paladinhood, but at times Garth still forgets this and attempts to use one of his former abilities. Although his personal record is impeccable, Garth does have a secret: his twin brother Altis was a thoroughly evil character until the day of his execution for multiple murder. This is hardly the kind of information a prospective paladin would wish to become public.





Countess Messalina Hunyadi: S 18/76; I 11; W 14; C 18; D 12; Ch 18; Neutral Evil Vampire; AC 1; hp 41; weapon: dagger; Other Magic Items: **scarab of protection** (which has already absorbed five level drain attacks).

The Countess is landless since, although she has inherited the title, the lands are overrun with evil humanoids. At present she is trying to persuade the King to mount an expedition to regain her lands. Obviously if word that she is a Vampire gets out she will have no chance of ruling the County once again. Countess Messalina is here to persuade Baron Falkens to lend his support.

One of the trunks that the Countess brought with her is full of earth from her home churchyard. The Countess sleeps in a trunk after arranging the pillows in her bed to resemble a sleeping woman. The DM should remember that only *direct* sunlight hurts Vampires. They can be in sunny rooms, or even go outside on a cloudy day without damage.

Master Merchant Dina Fissen: S 17; I 17; W 13; C 17; D 22; Ch 17; Lawful Evil female Rakshasa; AC -5; hp 33; Magical items: **ring of protection +1**; **wand of negation** (5 charges), **rod of cancellation**; Spells usually memorised: **charm person**, **magic missile**, **sleep** (x2), **forget** (x2), **dispel magic**, **slow**, **command** (x2), **light**. Move Silently 49%. Her spells books also include the following spells: **detect magic**, **hold portal**, **identify**, **read magic**, **shield**, **write**, **detect invisible**, **invisibility**, **knock**, **locate object**, **stinking cloud**, **strength**, **clairvoyance**, **fireball**, **hold person**, **lightning bolt**, **suggestion**, all first level Clerical spells.

Originally a silk merchant, Dina has diversified into many fields and grown very rich. She has worked very hard to conceal her race, which would ruin her if it became known. On those few occasions when she has been caught with her illusions down, judicious use of her **forget** spells have recovered the situation, which is why she always has at least one memorised at any one time. To increase her security Dina even married a human man, now dead in a riding 'accident', from a minor noble family. She has kept close links with her husband's family and has done them a favour by bringing her niece and ward, Mara Forthelli, to the Solstice celebrations in an attempt to find her a husband.

Mara Forthelli: S 11; I 8; W 9; C 14; D 8; Ch 15; 0 level Lawful Neutral human female; AC 10; hp 5; unarmed.

Mara grew up in a minor noble household and is trained in arts which will make her useful as wife to another scion of a noble house. Although brave enough to investigate anything unusual, Mara tends to scream a lot and faint when faced with danger. She is at the Solstice with her aunt, Master Merchant Dina Fissen, but most of the time she finds herself in the company of Tarn Torsil, an eligible landowner's young son.

Groff Torsil: S 19 (+3, +7); I 11; W 11; C 17; D 14; Ch 12; Neutral male doppelganger; AC 5; hp 23; Weapon: whatever needed (D1-12) or by weapon type +7 if using a 'real' weapon; Magic Item: **potion of clairvoyance**.

Groff Torsil was a major landowner who recently had a 'bad fall' while hunting in the woods around his home — which still causes bouts of amnesia. In fact Groff Torsil was abducted by doppelgangers, one of whom replaced him while the others extracted all the information they could from Groff and passed it to the new 'Groff'. The doppelgangers are now supplied with everything they need from the Torsil estates.

'Groff Torsil' has come to the castle to find a match for his 'son' Tarn.

Tarn Torsil: S 14; I 9; W 6; C 9; D 9; Ch 13; 4th level Lawful Neutral human Fighter; AC 10; hp 27; Weapon: dagger (but also proficient with light crossbow, broadsword and spear) or **broadsword +2** (+4 vs lycanthropes and shapechangers) which is kept in his bedroom.

Tarn is the eldest son of Groff Torsil. He has been given a noble's expensive training as his father had little faith in his mental agility and ability to run the Torsil estates. Tarn is determined to prove him wrong.

He has been spending most of the time during the Solstice celebrations in the company of Mara Forthelli, an attractive young noblewoman.

Master Merchant Verno Nimon: S 15 (18/53); I 16 (3); W 11 (3); C 12 (19); D 13; Ch 14 (0); 4th level Chaotic Evil male Fighter/Werewolf (numbers in brackets apply to the were-form); AC 10 (5); hp 24; weapon dagger (bite D 2-8); Magic Items: **boots of levitation**.

Verno is a travelling merchant in charge of a large caravan. He has been a werewolf for over five years, and consequently has good control over his transformations. The only time he will now undergo an involuntary change is in very stressful situations under full moonlight, but he still gets the urge to kill on nights of the full moon. The Solstice celebrations fall during the period when the moon is full.

Lady Sersi Cordos: S 18/51; I 16; W 11; C 19; D 11; Ch 14; Chaotic Evil Succubus; AC 0; hp 24; Weapon: bare hands (1-3+3/1-3+3).

Lady Sersi is the attractive young widow of an elderly general. Although viewed by most people as a social climber and gold-digger she manages to be a prominent figure in the circles she moves in, due to her wealth. She is carefully using her abilities to further her mission to spread as much chaos and suffering as possible by steering people in power towards this type of action. This she does subtly, manipulating her lovers and never revealing her true nature or aims. Were anyone to realise what she truly is, her value to those Demonlords who revel in suffering would be at an end.

NOTES FOR THE DM

If eight people are going to play in this scenario each should be given one of the above player characters. If there are nine players the Changeling should be added to the list of player characters.

With fewer people some players must run more than one character. If seven are playing the same person should run both Dina Fissen and Mara Forthelli. If six are playing Countess Hunyadi and Tarn Torsil should also be run by one person. Finally, if only five are playing Lady Cordos should be dropped in addition to the changes described above. The DM should seek to disguise the fact that many of the characters are 'flawed'. Each player should initially believe that his or her character alone has a secret to hide.

CREDITS:

Design: Chris Felton
Maps: Paul Ruiz
Art: Stephen Jones

PA MEMBERSHIP

The PA is a club for all players of role playing games, particularly the D&D® and AD&D™ games. Since it was founded in 1981, the PA has become the country's largest D&D club, and now has this 4-page section in IMAGINE™ magazine. The benefits of membership include:

* Free quarterly broadsheet featuring hobby articles and news, competitions and new product information.
* Free badge, sticker and personalised 'credit-card style' membership card.
* Special offers available only to PA members, including the 'R' series of modules and Bargain Basement — your chance to buy damaged-but-usable stock at greatly reduced prices. Fuller details of the special offers are given in the broadsheet.
* Free postage and packing on mail orders from TSR UK Ltd for UK and BFPO members.
* Discounts on tickets for GamesFair hobby conventions.
* Listings of PA members in your area (send SAE).

Membership of the PA costs £2.50 per year for new UK or BFPO members (£2.00 for renewals) and £5.00 (or US $10) for overseas members. Just fill in this coupon and send it to:

PA Memberships, TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Rd, Cambridge CB1 4AD, England

together with a cheque or postal order made payable to TSR UK Ltd.

☐ **Please enrol me as a new member of the Players Association.** I enclose a cheque/PO for £2.50 (overseas £5.00 or US $10).

☐ **Please renew my membership of the PA.** I enclose a cheque/PO for £2.00 (overseas £5.00 or US $10).

My PA number is .....

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms*) .....

.....

Address .....

.....

.....

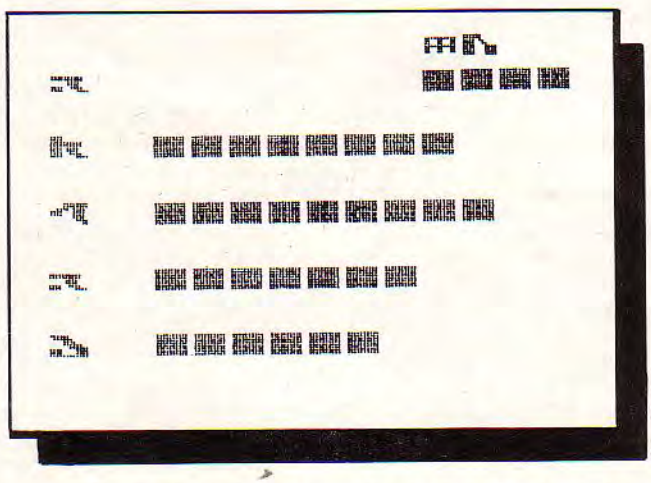
I do/do not* wish my name and address to be available to other members.
(* delete as appropriate) I13

D&D® PLAYERS ASSOCIATION NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER
OF THE BRITISH
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®
PLAYERS ASSOCIATION

TURNBULL TALKING

The final part of Patrick Thompson's riddle, the saga of which these pages have been following, came, appropriately, at the end of the adventure. We found ourselves in a very austere white room, the only relief being on the wall opposite the door. When we first entered, it looked like this:



The things marked ▦ were rectangular depressions in the wall. Below them, on rocks which I have not shown in the diagram, were large quantities of what looked like white marble tiles, of a size to fit the depressions, carrying all the symbols we had seen so far — a dozen or so of each symbol.

We studied this for no more than 30 seconds, deriving only the information I have already given you, when there was a blinding flash of light lasting a fraction of a second. When we had recovered from this, the DM told us that:
(a) 20% of our *original* hit points had been taken in damage (one already wounded party member keeled over at this point);
and (b) the four depressions to top and right had mysteriously filled with tiles, thus:

'Ah', said the brighter spirits, 'we have to fill in the remaining lines with tiles. But...'

I have, painfully, to record that at this point the worthies known by the (patently false) pseudonyms Bill Howard, Chris Rick, Allan Ovens and Dave Tant declared what I believe is known as a *nolle prosequi* and went off to play computer games, leaving Dave Rumble and me struggling with it.

The DM said little more, except that if we filled in a line incorrectly or failed to fill it in at all within a certain time, the flash of light would recur, the line would fill correctly, and another 20% of our original hit points would be taken in damage.

We succeeded ...just! Can you? This is difficult, so as a prize for the first correct solution out of the hat on May 1st I will give a free ticket (residential or non-residential, at the winner's preference) to **GamesFair '85**

Don Turnbull

Fanzines

February must have been one of the blackest months ever in the history of the gaming fanzine. Within days of each other, **Dragonlords**, **Quasits & Quasars** and **Wyrm's Claw** all announced that they were to fold. Without a doubt, the most bitterly regretted will be the loss of **Dragonlords**, the last issue of which (22) will be on sale at GamesFair. **DL 21** was released just before the announcement, but showed some evidence of the impending problem — with Ian Marsh now working for **White Dwarf** it was unfair to expect that **DL** could maintain its complete independence. He, correctly, resigned, and Mike Lewis then folded the 'zine, since it was clearly beyond the capabilities of one person.

So, who now can assume the mantle — remembering that **DL** was the GamesDay Best Fanzine of 1983, and had 600 readers? A few of the candidates have supplied us with their latest issues. **Miser's Hoard 6** stakes out an impressive claim, with articles on **D&D®** game combat, **Runequest**, NPC parties and a D&D/T&T solo scenario. It is very impressive.

Demon's Drawl 4 is likewise full of interesting articles; on innate abilities, combat in the GANGBUSTERS® game, and the Magic User. **Runestone 1&2** show a more unlikely contender, following the new character class route. **Tales From Tanelorn 6** teamed up with the latest Paul Mason 'gee-up' **Ian Marsh's Adventure Gaming Ideas Novice Edition** (I.M.A.... see, it's a joke!). **'Tufty'** is possibly an outside chance, but may be a little esoteric for mass appeal. There are other contenders, and I hope we can look at more of them next month.

By comparison, the postal gaming 'zines seem quiet. **Acolyte 54** is down to a more manageable size after recent excesses, as if drawing breath after a hectic 'Saturnalia'. **Hopscotch 37** carries the usual plethora of interesting games. **Walamalaysia Gazette 39** continues to offer a cheap forum for players of Diplomacy. **Greatest Hits 114** lives up to its name, carrying the mammoth results of the record poll, and a (comparatively) slim-line letters section. **Take That You Fiend 15&16** is strangely muted. Whatever all the postal gaming lads and lassies were up to over Christmas, it seems to have taken a lot out of them. Even **NMR! 47** claims to have gone 'on the wagon' — a claim it ruins by printing a guide to Soho pubs. Still, at least the above-mentioned actually managed to produce an issue. Maybe this is how the nightmare of 1984 manifests itself, not with a bang, but a muted whimper....

We did at last receive **PBM 3**, along with **Wargame News 15** from Mike Costello. For those with a general interest in play-by-mail games, this magazine, at 90p covers much of the same ground as Nicky Palmer's **Flagship 2**, which costs £1.75. Either magazine would offer a worthwhile insight into computer-moderated postal gaming, but those prices! This market is going to have to expand considerably before it can support magazines like this.

Lastly, while things are peaceful, let's just linger over a few 'fringe' items. Judge Dredd figures strongly on the cover of **Fantasy Advertiser 83**, wherein the comics collector will find much to read. With the forthcoming launch of the **Marvel Super-heroes** RPG from TSR, the links between comics and gaming must grow closer, and it will be interesting to see if FA expands its RPG coverage. **Cerebo 19**, the X-Men 'zine, might also drift in the same direction, since the mutants will be one of the early subjects of a module for this game.

One possible link-man might be Mike Lewis, now the ex-editor of **Dragonlords** and the guiding hand behind **The World of Animation**. Well, OK, it's more Bugs Bunny and Top Cat than Spider-man and the Hulk.... but it's a start. And the final word is for **Ansible 37**, the SF fandom 'zine from Dave Langford. The news is always up-to-date, if slightly risqué....

Dragonlords / The World of Animation, Mike Lewis, Gibraltar Point, White Hill, Tackley, OXON OX5 3AY (60p/20p); **Miser's Hoard**, John McKeown, 22 Hall Lane, Upminster, Essex (50p); **Demon's Drawl**, Jeremy Nuttall, 49 Longdown Rd, Congleton, Cheshire (35p); **Runestone**, Bill Lucas, 19 Olden Mead, Lordship Estate, Letchworth, HERTS SG6 2SP (50p); **Tales From Tanelorn**, Matt Williams, 24 Moor St, Earlsdon, Coventry, West Midlands CV5 6EQ (50p); **I.M.A.G.I.N.E.**, Paul Mason, 24 Moor St, Earlsdon, Coventry, West Midlands CV5 6EQ (50p?);
Acolyte, Pete Tamlyn, 2 Poplar Rd, The Coppice, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 5BN (sub); **Hopscotch**, Alan Parr, 6 Longfield Gdns, Tring, Herts HP23 4DN (20p +post); **Walamalaysia Gazette**, Dave Thorby, 200 Lavender Hill, Enfield, Middx EN2 8NJ (7p +post); **Greatest Hits**, Pete Birks 65 Turney Rd, London SE21 7JB (50p); **Take That You Fiend**, John Harrington, The Porch, 82 Hacton Drive, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 6DP (35p); **NMR!**, Brian Creese, 256 Canbury Pk Rd, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6LG (45p); **PBM / Wargame News**, Mike Costello, EMJAY, 17 Langbank Ave, Rise Park, Notts NG5 5BU (90p/70p); **Flagship**, Nicky Palmer, PO Box 714, Coleshill, Birmingham (£1.75);
Fantasy Advertiser, Martin Lock, 3 Marlow Ct, Britannia Sq, Worcester WR1 3DP (50p); **Cerebo**, G F Willmetts, 74 Gloucester Rd, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 6EA (75p); **Ansible**, Dave Langford, 94 London Rd, Reading, Berks RG1 5AU.

Fanzines Reviewed by Paul Cockburn

Clubs

A full list of clubs appeared last issue. Listed here are a few more. If your club is not mentioned, why not drop us a line?

First, a club in **Kings Lynn**. St Anns Garrison meets every Sunday afternoon 2-6pm. They play the D&D game, plus T&T, Traveller, and board and figure games. Details from Jeff Hoyle, 5 Park Avenue, Kings Lynn, Norfolk.

In **Basildon**, Essex, the SEWARS Games Club (only the members can remember what it stands for!) meets every Tuesday, 7.15 - 10.30pm, at Malyones Meeting Hall (off Felmores). Games played: any! All welcome, age 10 up. Contact Chris Baylis, Tel: 0268 26969. The club also produces the widely read fanzine **SEWARS**.

Apologia

It seems that Ian Livingstone, both personally and on behalf of Games Workshop, is upset with us over some comments made by Pete Tamlyn in his gossip column **Tavern Talk**. These were, we believe, meant to be humourous (even if barbed) and to raise a smile. We are sorry if they have given offence to Ian and the team who produce **White Dwarf**. Neither we nor Pete intended them to do that.

DIALOG

***Lew Pulsipher** offers another idiosyncratic look at gaming in the land of the ~~expensive~~ free.*

Alter resurrected the subject of a mini-convention I'd attended a few weeks before. I was just looking through the copies of **IMAGINE™** magazine in which I had first mentioned **Wrath of Con**, and happened to mention once more that I thought it was reasonably well organised, but that the technical, or perhaps I should say mechanical standards of refereeing were unsatisfactory.

'So you didn't like the refereeing,' said Alter. 'What about the players?'

'You know, Alter, I quit playing games for the "thrill of victory" long ago (except for the **D&D** game, where nobody has to lose). What interests me are psychology, motives, the playersb more than the game. So a convention pick-up game or tournament is a good place to indulge myself....'

'But you usually watch instead of play.'

'Yes, it's easier, and less distracting, just to watch. Anyway, as I watched Zandy play in the tournament, I thought of the players I'd seen, and how they differed. I tried to think of ways they tipped off their propensities, you know, ways to spot the incompetents, troublemakers, and the good players. But appearance didn't tip off anything, except perhaps that those who **looked** very sloppy tended to be quite unpredictable — chaotic — in the game.'

'How about age? In general, kids —' Alter meant anyone under 18 '— seem to know the letter of the rules better than, say, the over-25s....'

'....but the older players tend to be less prone to foolishness or incompetence, yes.' I agreed. 'There weren't many kids around there for a comparison. The over-30s seemed to have a better grasp of skilful play than some of the younger ones, but that could be a result of greater experience, rather than just age.'

I looked at the notes I'd jotted down at the con. 'What the players said at first didn't say much about their competence either. But after a game had gone on a while I noticed some distinct types.

'First, there's the loudmouth. I don't mean someone who talks a lot, I mean the fellow who constantly says 'we do such-and-such', but when something goes wrong he's sure it wasn't his character doing it. One guy irritated me so much, I barked at him to speak for himself. That's the advantage of being over 30, I don't feel I have to tolerate such people. They may not like it, but they're more likely to take it from an "oldster".'

'Being 6' 7" and 15 stone 10 helps a lot.'

'Um, true. Then there were the players who seemed to get a tremendous kick out of rolling attack dice. They didn't suggest tactics, they didn't want to be spell-casters, they were quite passive — but they loved to melee.' I raised my voice so Alter could hear as he went to the kitchen. 'Actually, I enjoy watching them, their pleasure is so obvious, and they rarely get in the way of the brainwork. I've noticed that an unusually large percentage of this group are women, for some reason.'

'Don't let the feminists hear you say that.'

'I can't help the way it is. Then there's the type who starts by asking who the caller will be.'

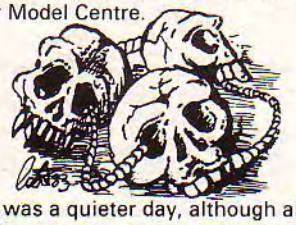
Alter came back, doing his Cookie Monster imitation. 'Munch. How passive! I can't imagine

EXETER UNIVERSITY GAMES CONVENTION

The last weekend of January saw over 150 FRP board and table-top wargamers handing over the small entrance fee to attend the Exeter University Games Convention.

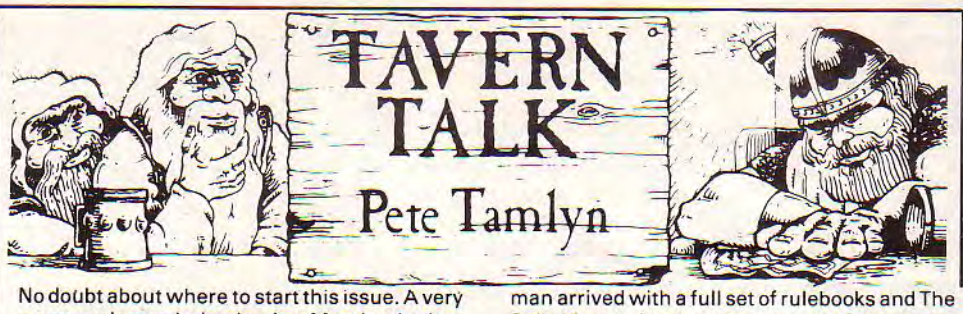
The convention succeeded admirably in its intention, to allow people to meet and chat with other devotees of the hobby, and watch and take part in games. The many table-top battles taking place, particularly on Saturday, provided an impressive visual display, and the two copies of **Talisman** available enjoyed almost constant use as people tried out, and frequently got hooked on, this relatively new game. With **Kingmaker, Civilization, Warlock, Nuclear War, Lost Worlds** and others all making appearances, there was plenty of opportunity for players to try out a new game.

Old habits die hard, and the AD&D game competition had all 36 places booked within half-an-hour of the convention starting. Six contestants progressed from Saturday afternoon's first round to the final on Sunday, there to cause problems in the selection of a winner by very efficient party play. Eventually Alan Gentle and Chris Paul received the first and second prizes of boxes of figures donated by the Exeter Model Centre.



Sunday was a quieter day, although almost 100 people were around by mid-afternoon, and with the convention due to end at 6pm, the refreshment stall and Paul and Teresa Bailey's trade stand both closed down in the late afternoon. While rooms remained available until 11pm to finish late-starting games, many people decided to move the few yards to the bar, there to wind up the convention in the time-honoured manner.

Jeff Wilks



No doubt about where to start this issue. A very warm welcome indeed to Ian Marsh who has found his way out of the Stygian Gloom of the Games Workshop packing department and joined the staff of **WD**. Unfortunately, because both **DragonLords** editors will now be writing for the Dwarf, this very popular fanzine, which has previously been noted for its irreverance, will fold after issue 22. Still, if that means that the Dwarf will be more interesting and more responsive to hobby requirements, then who are we to complain.

But with one professional career just taking off, a few more have come to a sudden end. You'll all know by now that the **Games Centre** chain of shops has gone into liquidation and some excellent information concerning the whys and wherefores of the collapse has been available in fanzines thanks to the fact that Dave Hulks and Marc Gascoigne were working in the Oxford Street shop at the time. As far as I'm aware, Dave was only working there as a holiday job but for Marc it is back to the dole queue. The games industry is not a particularly stable one and I for one am glad that I don't depend on it for my livelihood.

Many hobbyists, of course, are still at school or college, and one about to make the transition between these two is Steve Norledge who looks likely to be off to Southampton University. This just goes to show what a small world it is, for among the large numbers of universities in the country there are very few that have a reputation for producing or housing hobby members. Warwick, with Paul Mason, Matt Williams and Bryan Betts currently in residence, is the most prominent at present, and St Andrews has a good history, but Southampton, ah, well...

The Games Club there was founded by Kim Dent — now co-editor of **Denver Glont** — but I and many notable **Acolyte** contributors were at the first meeting. While I got lumbered with running the club, Kim went on to be President of the Student Union which proved to be very useful for getting Acolyte printed. Not surprisingly with me in charge, the AD&D game was not much played, but in my last year a young man arrived with a full set of rulebooks and The Beholder and set up in a corner with some friends. He turned out to be Graham Staplehurst. I'm not too well up on the current scene there, but apparently one of the regular GMs, Guy Hewitt, runs one of those games where the players go around killing gods and resurrection is automatic unless you go below -40 hp. He calls the game 'Guy Gax' as well. What Norledge will make of that I don't know, but at least Hewitt is keeping up the tradition of involvement in Student Politics, being a leading light in the Labour Group.

Finally, some space to comment on the excellent letter from Victoria Kassner in issue 11. One of the things she mentions is the difficulty that novices have in getting into the hobby 'crowd'. Obviously any established group of friends is going to seem somewhat daunting to an outsider, but one way that you can make things easier is to subscribe to one or two of the chattier fanzines. After you've read a few issues, try writing a couple of letters. Then, when you go to a convention, there will be a lot of people who know your name and are eager to meet you. Several people have asked me to write personality profiles of the more prominent hobby members which I may yet get round to sometime, but Chris Baylis has been sending out questionnaires to editors so there is likely to be something along those lines in **SEWARS** soon.

The other comment of Victoria's that caught my eye was that about the small number of females in the hobby. The crowd I normally play with has always included a fair number of girls. Nowhere near 50% admittedly, but compared to, say, figure wargaming, FRP is a veritable hive of female activity. Of course there are people who would turn the hobby into a male enclave — witness Dave Noble's article in a recent **drunk & disorderly**, but in general there is no reason why women should not play an equal part in our games. In fact role-playing has been responsible for a fair number of happy marriages, including my own.

Pete Tamlyn

how anyone could play with an official caller. I'd fall asleep. Crunch.'

'No, you wouldn't stand for it in the first place.' I grabbed a couple cookies myself. 'Always irritating are the people who don't prepare, who don't add up their plusses to hit and damage, for example, so every time they roll they have to go through the whole process. What a waste of time. Sometimes it's because they don't know the rules, but most often, they aren't really paying attention. Worse are people who think they know the rules, but obviously don't. I think they must have referees who let players do anything, and have any advantage, that isn't clearly prohibited.'

'Like the people who think a thief gets backstab damage for every attack from behind, even if the enemy knows they're there.'

'Yes. It gets obvious when you hear some of the things people think spells will do. No-one could thoroughly define so many spells, so referees have to limit the interpretation. Evidently many referees don't realise that, or they just don't have the strength of personality to resist sophistry and pausible arguments from players who want unearned advantages.'

'It seems to me that from one point of view there are five kinds of players. First, those who don't know the rules, but still enjoy playing — perhaps like your lasses who love melee. Second, those who don't know the rules except for which dice to roll in combat — maybe that's more like some of the melee-lovers.... Third, those who know some rules, but not enough to play a spell-caster —'

'That was a very common type at the con.'

'Fourth, those who know the letter of the rules, but who interpret them poorly — they know the letter but not the spirit. They think they're experts, but when they run up against a tough referee, they're lost. They're particularly bad about spell-casting classes, for example playing clerics with nothing but healing spells — a peculiar kind of incompetence. And fifth, the true experts, who might not know every detail of the rules, but understand the spirit, and who can find the details if necessary.'

'I agree; and length of experience often doesn't correlate with your categories. The trick, at a convention, is to try to indentify the different player-types, and have spell-casters and other vital characters played by the true experts, the non-spell-casters by those who will enjoy them and be content wih them, and the least important or disruptive characters played by the problem players. When Zandy played in the tournament, we both knew he ought to be the magic user. He's too polite to grab, so I (as a spectator) mentioned that he had played eight years. Fortunately, a lot of the players in that game knew they shouldn't be playing the only magic user in the party. He took the 14th level MU and saved the party several times, though they didn't win the tournament.'

'But you said that you couldn't peg player types before the game started.'

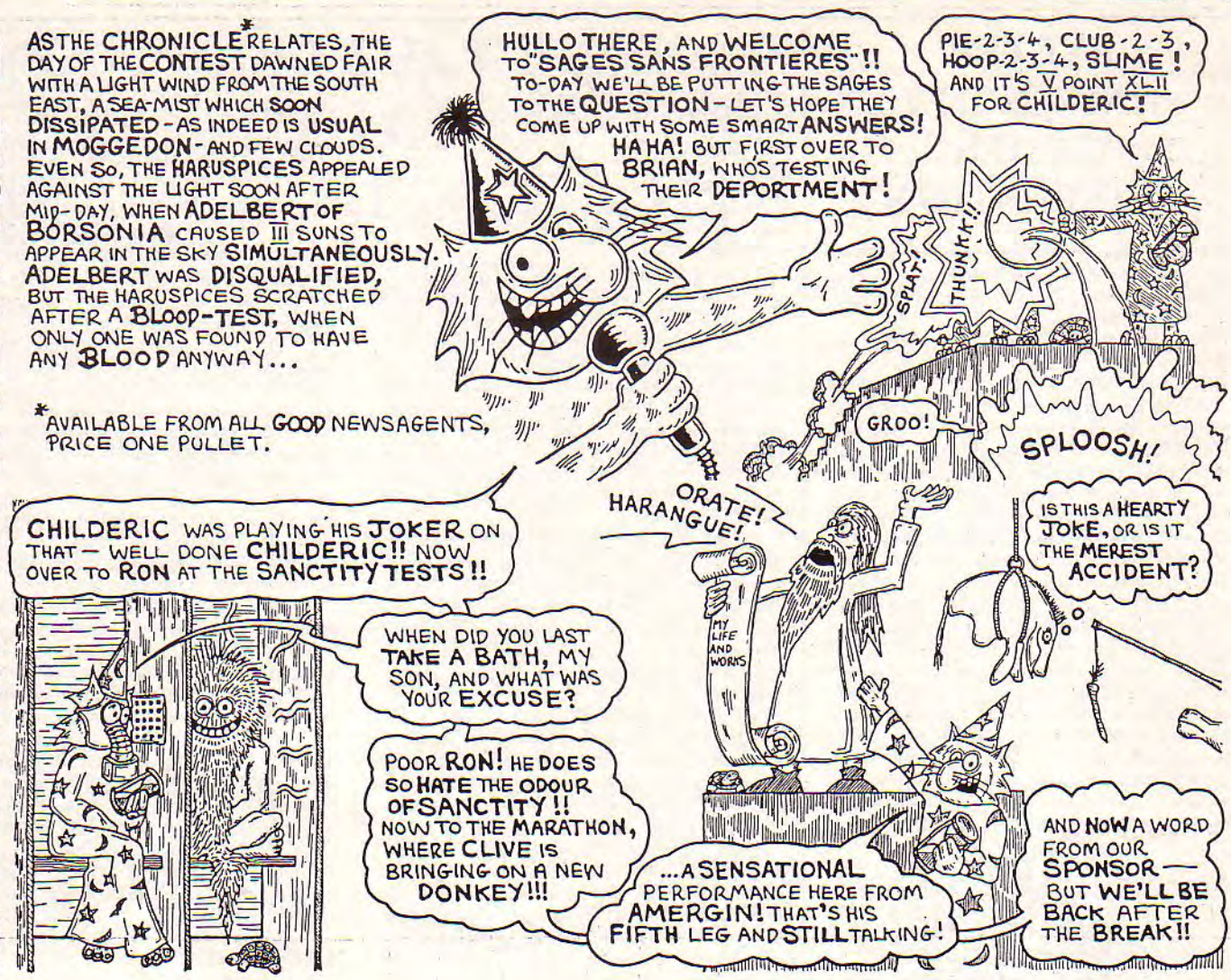
'Yeah, that's the problem. More study is required! Back to the dungeon with you!'

Lew Pulsipher

ALBERT MOGGEDON

AS THE CHRONICLE* RELATES, THE DAY OF THE CONTEST DAWNED FAIR WITH A LIGHT WIND FROM THE SOUTH EAST, A SEA-MIST WHICH SOON DISSIPATED - AS INDEED IS USUAL IN MOGGEDON - AND FEW CLOUDS. EVEN SO, THE HARUSPICES APPEALED AGAINST THE LIGHT SOON AFTER MID-DAY, WHEN ADELBERT OF BORSONIA CAUSED III SUNS TO APPEAR IN THE SKY SIMULTANEOUSLY. ADELBERT WAS DISQUALIFIED, BUT THE HARUSPICES SCRATCHED AFTER A BLOOD-TEST, WHEN ONLY ONE WAS FOUND TO HAVE ANY BLOOD ANYWAY...

*AVAILABLE FROM ALL GOOD NEWSAGENTS, PRICE ONE PULLET.


HULLO THERE, AND WELCOME TO "SAGES SANS FRONTIERES"!! TO-DAY WE'LL BE PUTTING THE SAGES TO THE QUESTION - LET'S HOPE THEY COME UP WITH SOME SMART ANSWERS! HA HA! BUT FIRST OVER TO BRIAN, WHO'S TESTING THEIR DEPORTMENT!
PIE-2-3-4, CLUB-2-3, HOOP-2-3-4, SLIME! AND IT'S V POINT XLII FOR CHILDERIC!
SPLAT!
THUNK!!
GROO!
SPLOOSH!
ORATE! HARANGUE!
MY LIFE AND WORKS
IS THIS A HEARTY JOKE, OR IS IT THE MEREST ACCIDENT?
CHILDERIC WAS PLAYING HIS JOKER ON THAT — WELL DONE CHILDERIC!! NOW OVER TO RON AT THE SANCTITY TESTS!!
WHEN DID YOU LAST TAKE A BATH, MY SON, AND WHAT WAS YOUR EXCUSE?
POOR RON! HE DOES SO HATE THE ODOUR OF SANCTITY!! NOW TO THE MARATHON, WHERE CLIVE IS BRINGING ON A NEW DONKEY!!!
...A SENSATIONAL PERFORMANCE HERE FROM AMERGIN! THAT'S HIS FIFTH LEG AND STILL TALKING!
AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR — BUT WE'LL BE BACK AFTER THE BREAK!!

BEATTIES

SUPER SALE

STARTS APRIL 16th

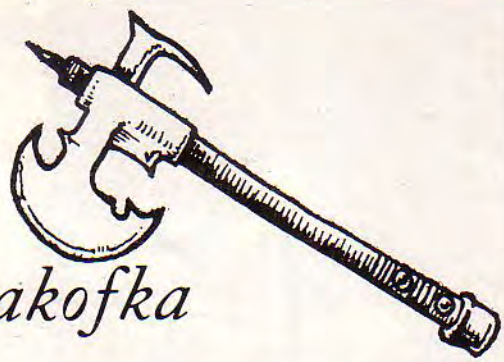
HUNDREDS OF BARGAINS!

For the discerning model enthusiast there's only one sale. The Beatties Super Sale. Starting on April 16th and lasting for just three weeks. There are bargains galore, but be sure to come in early for the best goodies. Please see our other advertisement for the address of your nearest store. Instant Credit available – subject to Status. Typical APR 29.8 variable. Please ask or write for details. Finance provided by Welbeck Cardholder Services Ltd., 69 Clarendon Rd, Watford, Herts. Beatties licensed Credit Brokers.

£250 INSTANT CREDIT!

New! Combat Results Table, Saving Throw Matrix and Experience Point Values for the AD&D™ game

by Gary Gygax and Lenard Lakofka



*This article was first published in **DRAGON**® magazine, issue 80, December 1983, and is reproduced here by kind permission of that journal's editor.*

© E Gary Gygax & Lenard Lakofka

The following material is not official, but is provided here for your study and comment. Gary has said that an expanded combat results table is certainly desirable, so perhaps that part of the following information will eventually be made part of the official rules. However, the suggestions on the changes to the experience point chart are entirely Lenard's.

Restructuring the combat charts

The combat results table in the **DMG** for fighters can be altered to give a 5% better chance to hit as the character gains each new level of experience, as per the "Special notes regarding fighters' progression". There is no reason why the principle outlined in this note could not be used to expand the combat charts for all character classes and monsters, and at the same time for all of this information to be placed on a single chart. The result would be something like the **Attack Matrix for all Character Classes and Monsters** below. The four small extrapolations made from the five charts in the **DMG** are given hereafter, but they would only affect low-level magic users, peasants, monsters with only one or two hit points and clerics of 19th level or higher. Purists can easily alter this chart to make it conform to the **DMG**.

This expanded chart will give a character a 5% better chance 'to hit' in melee on virtually every promotion, instead of having to progress some number of levels to gain a 5%, 10%, or even 15% increase. This chart will also demonstrate why the current experience point award system needs some minor alterations.

The same principle could likewise be applied to saving throws. To parallel the combat results table, all of the matrices for saving throws have also been modified accordingly and placed on one chart, as illustrated overleaf. An examination of this chart will bring to light more of the problems in the current xp award system.

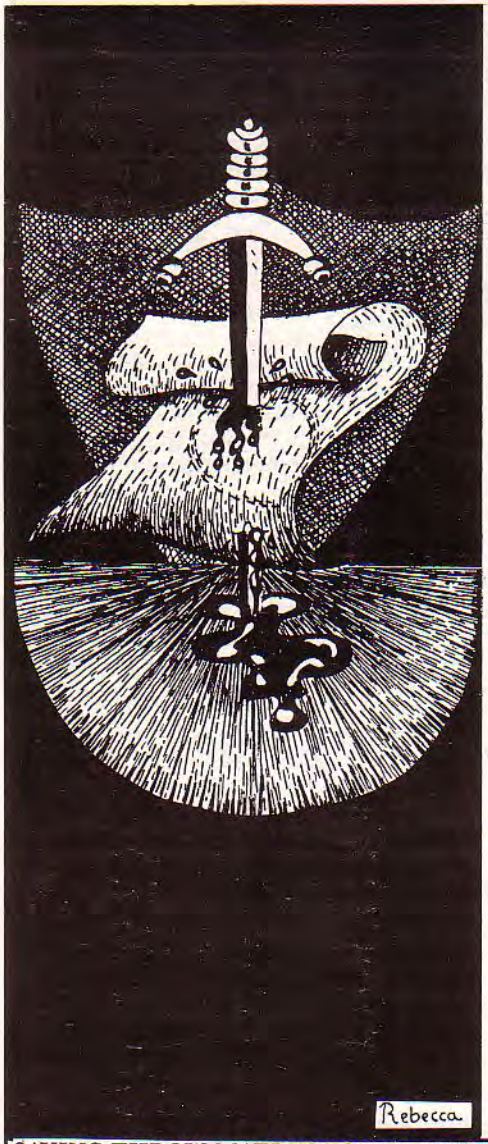
Notes on the attack matrix

This combat results table is true to Tables IA, IB, IC, ID1 and II on pages 74-75 of the **DMG**, with the following exceptions (these can be changed back to the original form if you so desire):

1. A 1st level magic user hits AC10 on a roll of 12; on the **DMG** chart the same character would hit on a roll of 11. The revision makes it tougher for a 1st-level MU to engage in physical combat and better separates that character from other 1st-level characters who hit AC10 on a roll of 10 or 11.

ATTACK MATRIX FOR ALL CHARACTER CLASSES AND MONSTERS

Monster (HD)	1-2 hp	1-4 hp		1	1+1	1+4	2+4	3+4	4+4	6+4	7+4	8+4	9+4	11+4	13+4	15+4	
					1+3	2+3	3+3	4+3	6+3	7+3	8+3	9+3	11+3	13+3	15+3	& up	
Fighter (level)	0	M@A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Cleric (level)			1-2	3	4-5	6	7-8	9	10-11	12	13-14	15	16-17	18	19+		
Thief (level)		1-2	3-4	5	6-7	8	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	17-18	19-20	21+				
M-U (level)	1	2-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10	11-12	13	14-15	16-17	18-20	21+					
Opponent's AC:																	
-10	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16
-9	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15
-8	25	24	23	22	21	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14
-7	24	23	22	21	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13
-6	23	22	21	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12
-5	22	21	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11
-4	21	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10
-3	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9
-2	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8
-1	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7
0	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6
1	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5
2	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4
3	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
4	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
5	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
6	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
7	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1
8	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2
9	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3
10	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4



2. The man-at-arms is given as a separate entry on the revised table (ranking between 0-level characters and 1st-level fighters), while such characters are not specially accounted for in the **DMG**. This means that the capability of the true non-combatant (0-level) human is moved down one notch, so that he hits AC10 on a roll of 12 instead of 11.
3. Monsters with 1-2 hit points are distinguished from those with 1-4 hit points, making the former 5% less likely to hit.
4. Clerics of 19th level or higher hit AC10 on a roll of -2, while the book calls for them to do so on -1.

Notice that the categories for monsters are defined differently than in the **DMG**. For instance, creatures of 3+4 to 4+3 hit dice are grouped together. This is in accordance with the note under Table II, page 75, saying that 'any plus above +3 equals another hit die'.

An all-in-one saving throw matrix

Below is a chart that spells out a suggested set of saving throws for all classes, using slightly different numbers from those given in the **DMG** matrix, on page 79, for levels (or hit dice) 1-15. For instance, a cleric of level 6 or 7 needs an 11 to save against a petrification attack. In the rules, the cleric's save vs petrification goes from 12 (at levels 4-6) to 10 (at levels 7-9) without stopping at 11 at all. It seems more logical to have a character's saving throws improve by one number (5%) increments in the same way as the new combat results table works.

The two left-hand columns are new, one for 0-level characters and one for monsters of less than one hit die. The numbers given in those columns are simply extrapolated from the saving throws for 1st-level characters, adding one for the '1-1' column and another one for the '0' column. The chart given here is not carried out to levels higher than 15, but an enterprising DM could easily do so.

Awarding experience

One of the Dungeon Master's most important functions (according to most players!) is the awarding of experience at the end of the adventure or an evening of play. To do this properly, one must re-evaluate the chart on page 85 of the **Dungeon Masters Guide**.

When we look at the experience point values for monsters given on page 85 of the **DMG**, we see that monsters are usually grouped in a pattern x+1 to y (eg, 4+1 to 5). This pattern, however, does not properly reflect that a monster's 'to hit' probabilities change between 4+3 and 4+4. That is, a 4HD monster hits on the same number as a 4+3HD monster, but a 4+4HD monster hits as a 5HD monster.

The rules on saving throws (page 79, **DMG**) specify that a 4HD monster (one that is primarily a fighting type) saves as a 4th level fighter, while one with 4+1 to 4+4 hit dice saves as a 5th level fighter.

The two facts taken together mean that the experience point award for a certain monster is based more upon that monster's

SAVING THROW MATRIX FOR CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

	Level (or hit dice) of the character or monster																
	0	1-1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Paralyzation, poison or death magic																	
Clerics	12	11	10	10	10	9	9	8	8	7	7	6	6	6	5	5	5
Fighters	16	15	14	14	13	13	12	11	10	10	9	8	7	6	5	5	4
Magic-users	16	15	14	14	14	14	14	13	13	13	12	12	11	11	11	11	11
Thieves	15	14	13	13	13	13	12	12	12	12	11	11	11	11	10	10	10
Petrification or polymorph																	
Clerics	15	14	13	13	13	12	12	11	11	10	10	9	9	9	8	8	8
Fighters	17	16	15	15	14	14	13	12	11	11	10	9	8	8	7	6	5
Magic-users	15	14	13	13	13	12	12	11	11	11	10	10	9	9	9	8	8
Thieves	14	13	12	12	12	12	11	11	11	11	10	10	10	10	9	9	9
Rod, staff or wand																	
Clerics	16	15	14	14	14	13	13	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	9	9	9
Fighters	18	17	16	16	15	15	14	13	12	12	11	10	9	9	8	7	6
Magic-users	13	12	11	11	11	10	10	9	9	9	8	8	7	7	7	6	6
Thieves	16	15	14	14	14	13	12	12	12	11	10	10	10	9	9	9	9
Breath weapon																	
Clerics	18	17	16	16	16	15	15	14	13	13	13	12	12	12	11	11	11
Fighters	20	19	17	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4
Magic-users	17	16	15	15	15	14	14	13	13	13	12	12	11	11	11	10	10
Thieves	18	17	16	16	16	16	15	15	15	15	14	14	14	14	13	13	13
Spells																	
Clerics	17	16	15	15	15	14	14	13	12	12	12	11	11	11	10	10	10
Fighters	19	18	17	17	16	15	14	14	13	12	11	11	10	9	8	8	7
Magic-users	14	13	12	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	9	9	8	8	8	7	7
Thieves	17	16	15	15	14	14	13	13	12	12	11	11	10	10	9	9	8

BEATTIES

£250 INSTANT CREDIT
Subject to status. Please ask or write for details. Typical APR 29.8 variable. Finance provided by Welbeck Cardholder Services Ltd., 69 Clarendon Rd., Watford, Herts.
Licensed Credit Brokers

For Dungeons and Dragons just venture through our portals into our mystical halls, here you'll find the treasure you seek.

HOLBORN 202 High Holborn, London WC1V 7BD 01-405 6285/8592
FINCHLEY 21/23 Ballards Lane, Finchley Central, London N31XP 01-349 2257
LEWISHAM 210 Lewisham High Street, London SE13 6JP 01-852 0449
*SOUTHGATE 10 The Broadway, Southgate, London N14 6PN 01-886 4258
WOOD GREEN 104/106 High Road, Wood Green, London N22 6HE 01-888 0937
BIRMINGHAM 26 South Mall, B'ham Shopping Centre, B2 4XD 021 643 8604
BLACKPOOL 19 Hounds Hill Centre, Victoria Street, FY1 4HU 0253 26461
BRIGHTON 4/8 Dyke Road, BN1 3FE 0273 776626
BRISTOL 17/19 Penn Street, BS1 3AW 0272 20259
CARDIFF Northgate House, Kingsway, CF1 4AD 0222 397645
CROYDON 135A North End, CR0 1TN 01-688 1585
KINGSTON 30/32 Eden Street, KT1 1EP 01-549 5464
LEEDS 16/18 King Charles Street, LS1 6LT 0532 456611
LIVERPOOL 36/37 Dawson Way, St John's Centre, L1 1LJ 051 709 0799
MANCHESTER 4/6 Brown Street, off Market St. M2 1EE 061 834 0279
NEWCASTLE 43/47 Pilgrim Street, NE1 6QE 0632 324161
NOTTINGHAM 3 Mount Street, NG1 6JW 0602 411693
ROMFORD 7/11 High Street, RM1 1JU 0708 24783
SHEFFIELD 38 Pinstone Street, S1 2HN 0742 77864
SOUTHAMPTON 114 East Street, SO1 1HD 0703 24843
WATFORD 70 The Parade, High Street, WD1 2AW 0923 27563
*MAIL ORDERS TO SOUTHGATE

saving throws than upon its ability to fight. That seems like backwards logic.

A simple solution would be to make the combat tables and the saving throw matrix behave in the same fashion and progress in the same fashion; ie, a 3+4HD to 4+3HD monster saves as a 4th-level fighter, while a monster of 4+4 to 5+3HD strikes 5% more often and saves as a 5th-level fighter.

If that becomes the rule, then designing a new chart for the experience point value of monsters becomes an easy matter. Following the chart are lists of characteristics and abilities that should be classified as special or exceptional abilities. Many of the individual listings are taken directly from the **DMG**; suggested alterations and additions are printed in *italic* type.

This new experience point chart will give fair awards based on a monster's ability to hit and damage, plus its special and exceptional abilities. The awarding of experience points for killing character types (as NPCs) involves very complex calculations. Be sure to award extra experience for magic carried and employed, and for the ability to cast more and more powerful spells (due to ability or carried magic); for instance, the spells of a wizard are much more potent than those of an enchanter, and assigning a double exceptional ability would be a good way to reflect this.

Remember, none of this constitutes an official change to the rules for the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game as yet. If you find any particular problem or benefit with using the new system, write to us care of **IMAGINE**™ magazine, and let us know — *before* we get the new books printed!

Gary Gygax and Lenard Lakofka

EXPERIENCE POINT VALUES OF MONSTERS

Experience level or monster's hit dice	Basic X.P. value (BXPV)	X.P. per hit point (XP/HP)	Special ability X.P. bonus (SAXPB)	Exceptional ability X.P. addition (EAXPA)
1-6 hp	5	1	2	25
1-1 HD (Lvl 0)	7	1	3	30
1 HD (man-at-arms)	10	1	4	35
1+1 to 1+3 HD (Lvl 1)	20	2	8	45
1+4 to 2+3 HD (Lvl 2)	35	3	15	55
2+4 to 3+3 HD (Lvl 3)	60	4	25	65
3+4 to 4+3 HD (Lvl 4)	90	5	40	75
4+4 to 5+3 HD (Lvl 5)	150	6	75	125
5+4 to 6+3 HD (Lvl 6)	225	8	125	175
6+4 to 7+3 HD (Lvl 7)	375	10	175	275
7+4 to 8+3 HD (Lvl 8)	600	12	300	400
8+4 to 9+3 HD (Lvl 9)	900	14	450	600
9+4 to 10+3 HD (Lvl 10)	1100	15	575	725
10+4 to 11+3 HD (Lvl 11)	1300	16	700	850
11+4 to 12+3 HD (Lvl 12)	1550	17	825	1025
12+4 to 13+3 HD (Lvl 13)	1800	18	950	1200
13+4 to 14+3 HD (Lvl 14)	2100	19	1100	1400
14+4 to 15+3 HD (Lvl 15)	2400	20	1250	1600
15+4 to 16+3 HD (Lvl 16)	2700	22	1400	1800
16+4 to 17+3 HD (Lvl 17)	3000	25	1550	2000
17+4 to 18+3 HD (Lvl 18)	3500	27	1825	2250
18+4 to 19+3 HD (Lvl 19)	4000	30	2100	2500
19+4 to 20+3 HD (Lvl 20)	4500	32	2350	2750
20+4 and up (Lvl 21+)	5000	35	2600	3000

Typical special abilities:

Three or more attacks per round; missile discharge; armour class 0 or lower; special attacks (blood drain, crush, hug, etc); special defences (regeneration, hit only by special and/or magical weapons); high intelligence which usually affects combat; use of minor (basically defensive) spells; *attack multiple opponents in the same round; immunity or resistance to a particular common attack form (fire, lightning, cold); using* +1 armour (or any shield); using +1 weapon; using minor offensive/defensive magic item; ability to do more damage than like monsters (or characters) due to exceptional strength (but see below).

Typical exceptional abilities:

Energy level drain; paralysis; poison; major breath weapon; magic resistance; spell use; swallowing whole; ability to cause weakness; attacks causing maximum damage greater than *20 singly, 24 doubly, 28 trebly or 32* in all combinations possible in 1 round; *special purpose weapon; hit only by* +2 or better weapon; using protection item (cloak, ring) of *+1 to +3.*

Game Reviews

GW4 — THE MIND MASTERS

The impressive cover, good production and artwork fail to hide this time-wasting scenario TSR have released for the **GAMMA WORLD®** game.

The Mind Masters is similar to the **Rite of Passage** scenario that comes with the new boxed set, in as much as you are expected to play inexperienced characters sent on a quest from your home commune, led by a non-player character. The scenario governs the play and the players' thoughts, leaving very little room for them to think for themselves. As GM I felt more like King Sheep, with all the other sheep (players) following along behind quite mindlessly, than a referee adjudicating over the players' actions. Sentences like 'the party will be captured', the party **will** do this and that, take away the spontaneity of this adventure, and the players become pawns moved around by NPCs.

GW4 is written very tongue-in-cheek, and is based on the old, old formula of Mad Scientist capturing good guys, testing them in various ways, implant operations, outplant(?) operations, rescue and eventual triumphant return home with an armful of goodies. It is good for a giggle — little else — but I wouldn't recommend it to anyone over 12 years of age.

Another problem that I am now encountering is the difficulty of maintaining the same character from adventure to

NOTICES

SIEGE

Siege announces itself as the companion game to one of Standard Games' earlier releases **Cry Havoc**, while retaining its identity as an independent game. Indeed, Siege not only introduces rules to expand on the Cry Havoc rules, but also contains amendments which are to be incorporated into Cry Havoc sets. For those unfamiliar with either game, the basic concept is thirteenth-century warfare on a one-to-one rather than the more usual unit-to-unit scale.

The game is packed in what seems an unnecessarily large box that would be lucky to escape damage, especially if ordered by post. John Maitland of Standard Games commented that the box will shortly be reduced in size and posted in cartons — a big improvement. The maps depict a 'small border castle' and a camp. The design of the castle is perhaps a trifle too simple, and in some ways, illogical (for instance, the positioning of staircases to the battlements). The keep is quite small, and it is unclear whether part hexes can be used for counters. There are very few hexes surrounding the castle or camp, which makes multi-map scenarios appear rather artificial (eg in one scenario for Siege and Cry Havoc it is possible to have a camp, village crossroads and castle all within a few hexes of each other).

Three booklets are included with the game: one concerns itself with the historical background to the game and is quite informative for beginners with no knowledge of the period. It would have been useful if a list of references had been included for more experienced wargamers or for those with a greater interest in the period. Also explained in this booklet are the playing pieces and the ingenious method of flip-over and replacement to represent healthy, stunned, wounded and dead men.

The rules booklet is well organised, being divided into sections which introduce the newcomer to the rules at a steady pace. A useful feature is that each of the sections has a corresponding scenario in the third booklet. In the main the rules are clear, concise and fairly simple. Archery is decided by cross referencing a roll on a d10 (included in the set, incidentally) against cover type with differing results for various bows. It is interesting to note that because the boards are so small, short range is rarely exceeded and long range would be virtually impossible to exceed. Hand-to-hand combat is based on the same principle with the dice roll being cross referenced against odds generated from the combatants' attack and defence values. It does not seem sensible, however, that it is possible for attackers to be wounded themselves at odds of six-to-one (or eight-to-one against mounted opponents), and not possible to wound opponents at odds less than three-to-one, unless they are forced to retreat where they cannot.

A useful feature is a booklet including two scenarios for Siege and Cry Havoc, in addition to those corresponding to the sections of the rules booklet. Players are encouraged to develop their own scenarios. The play sheets are very useful, but unfortunately are badly arranged making it difficult to read the combat tables.

Siege may seem a little overpriced, but it is an enjoyable game and would probably be a good investment for experienced Cry Havoc campaigner and complete novice alike.

Mike Dean

***Siege** (£9.95) is produced by Standard Games & Publications, Arlon House, Station Road, Kings Langley, Herts.*

Distributors' names are given for information only.

OPERATION:

Contrary to expectation, this new **TOP SECRET®** module does not take place aboard the famous train of the title; rather it is a series of mini-scenarios which take place on trains all over Europe.

The players are Western agents (the unspecified 'Agency' they work for appears more and more to be a thinly disguised CIA, as American interests are mentioned on several occasions) confronting largely Communist foes. The scenarios each comprise about 2-3 sides and are suitable for 1-4 players. Without giving too much away, these are a varied mixture of escort duties, investigations and interceptions of the opposition. There are also six other suggested 'adventures' of a short paragraph each which could be fleshed out.

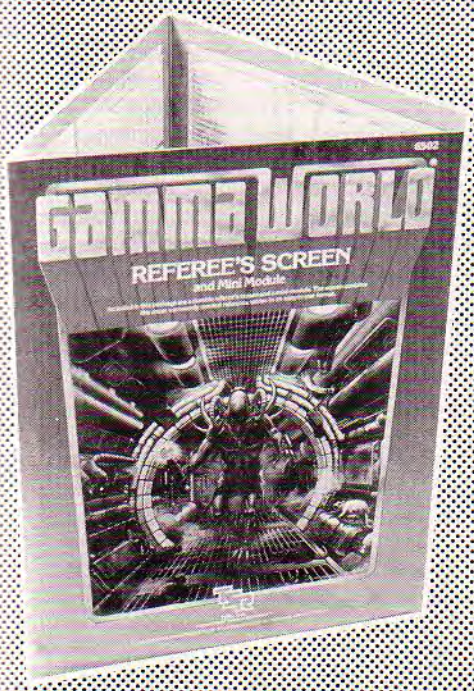
The bulk of the module consists of details of the European rail system, including a map, journey times and details on border crossing procedure. The detailed description of the railway cars is excellent and could possibly be used for

adventure. Every module starts with 'you are a member of the --- tribe/ group/ whatever', and it is usually made obvious that these communities keep themselves very much to themselves (except when they trot off on quests, etc) and thus strangers would not be made over-welcome — they especially would **not** be asked to join in some 'ancient' ritual (eg the Rite of Passage 'summons', etc). Therefore, how does one go about building up a GW character? The scenarios are written so that anyone who was not a member of the particular sect would not even consider taking on the task, because it simply wouldn't be any of their business, and besides they would not even know of the commune's ritual(s).

Parties in the **AD&D™** and most other role-playing games are basically out for experience and wealth, but in the GAMMA WORLD game they are out for the survival of their 'family unit' and should thus work together for that aim. It seems unlikely that a campaign could be run whereby a community could be constantly faced with external challenges of this kind. Why not allow for roving adventurers, or create a more plausible background for a community to exist in?

Chris Baylis

***GW4 - The Mind Masters**, a GAMMA WORLD scenario, is produced by TSR and costs £3.95.*



GAMESMASTERS SCREEN

The design of this **GAMMA WORLD®** GamesMasters Screen is similar to all screens available for role-playing games, a three part reference board set out to make refereeing easier, and thus speed up the cross-indexing of the many charts regularly used in the new GAMMA WORLD game system.

The front cover is reminiscent of the film *Alien* with the high quality artwork, but for some reason the inner sections are in dull two-tone grey. This, and the omission of the artifacts complexity table, are the only complaints I have against a useful (to referees!) standard product.

An interesting introduction to the new GAMMA WORLD game can be found in the mini-module supplied with the Screen — **The Albuquerque Starport** by Paul Reiche. This scenario plays quite well, although the first section is very similar to many familiar 'hack and slay' dungeon adventures from days long past.

However, once over the initial resemblance to D&D® modules, the scenario gives many opportunities for role-playing, and the need for thoughtful movement and decisions becomes apparent and more important than zapping mutations into the next world.

The Albuquerque Starport is far from being the most exciting GAMMA WORLD scenario that you will ever be involved in, but by releasing it as an 'extra' with the GM Screen, TSR are at last showing some respect and attention to a system they seemed to have lost all interest in.

Chris Baylis

*The **GAMMA WORLD GamesMasters Screen** (£3.95) from TSR comes complete with a new mini-module.*

ORIENT EXPRESS

other RPGs. The TOP SECRET game suffers from a lack of suitable floor plans and figures. Here the designers have produced 24 cut-out figures and plans of the train on which to place them. This certainly helps but the photos apparently feature the game designers and their cronies. As such they are pretty corny and my own 'agents' were reluctant to choose one. Another useful playing aid is a small diagram of the layout of the new train before each mission. Unfortunately the GM has to cover up information when he shows these to the players, which could have been avoided if the six plans were separated from the briefing notes.

Also included are some details of new items of equipment such as air pistols and a suitcase with numerous gadgets. There are also some recommended agents, although no doubt players will prefer to use their own. The latter should have languages usable on mainland Europe, although it is difficult to see how the same team will possess all the necessary languages to use the covers provided. Strangely, one of the agents provided is Japanese and can only speak his native language and English. Otherwise there are a few mistakes over times and places. Perhaps mistakes such as these are inevitable given the complex timetable of events.

To complete the missions the agents will, I think, require weapons. Here is a failing with the scenarios as border searches can be thorough. Admittedly an attempt has been made to give them an excuse to carry weapons, but there are still problems. First the statistics for hunting rifles are in **Operation: Fastpass** but not here. Secondly one of the missions requires the agents to pose as grieving relatives — with weapons?

This is a novel scenario which should be fun for GM and players alike. Best used in between other adventures — otherwise your players could become fed up with all those train journeys!

Nick Davison

AGENT DOSSIERS

These **TOP SECRET® Character Sheets** are new expanded versions of those included with the rules, the extra side being used for areas of knowledge, contacts and equipment etc. Skills introduced in recent scenarios make an appearance eg observation, as do others scheduled to appear in the new TOP SECRET Companion such as fingerprint and retina patterns. Curiously, they are stapled together: do players really have 16 characters?

Not a vital aid to playing the TOP SECRET game, but certainly a great deal tidier.

Nick Davison

***Operation: Orient Express** and **Agent Dossiers** for the TOP SECRET game from TSR both cost £3.95.*

These games are available from hobby shops.

Game Reviews

ESPIONAGE

Espionage is a Spy RPG set in the present, in which the players are members of the CIA. The rules are based on the Superhero game **Champions**, and anyone familiar with this system will spot a great number of similarities — for example, character generation is not dependent on the luck of the dice; players are given a basic number of points with which to build their own statistics and skills. Examples of the skills available include, as well as the familiar Disguise and Climbing, new ones such as Lip-reading and Bugging. Statistics and skills may be increased by the addition of disadvantages which hinder the character. Disadvantages include the inevitable 'hunted by someone' (the KGB?) or 'dependent NPC'.

On the other hand, there are some original rules to Espionage. Hit location has been introduced, which the characters either do randomly or aim for a specific part of their opponent's body. Naturally, the hit location affects the damage handed out. Unlike Superheroes, spies do get hit in the head with possibly lethal effects. The addition of 'bleeding rules' has a similiar result, as does the exclusion of any cop-out if a character is in danger of dying — Hero/Fortune/Fame points cannot be used. It is stressed that the means of getting out of a dangerous situation is to cause diversions or to surrender.

Another new feature is the 'package' method of building up your character, which simulates the training an agent receives and his career up to the start of play. This ensures that a character is reasonably balanced, and there are also a few bonus points to encourage players to take the packages.

Good points in the system include the workable means of handling concealed items, in particular weapons. A major disadvantage with the **TOP SECRET®** game is that concealment modifiers are given but not elaborated on. Here, values are given for hiding places such as suits, and for the items themselves. This works well and is subject to the concealment skill of the person hiding something and the observers' perception ability. The outcome is then decided by a simple die role. Similarly, I liked the requirement that weapon familiarity and skill has to be bought; an agent will not be just the same with anything he picks up.

On the debit side, there are a few bad things about this game. There is no index, and the rules are badly set out. Surprisingly, poisons and gases are not mentioned.

Included with the rules is an excellent introductory module, **Merchants of Terror**. This comprises three parts and involves the recovery of a US Army nuclear shell. Standardised guards are included to help the GM and there is advice on what to do in certain situations, for example if a contact is killed.

The designers were lax over one detail. There appears to be a real disadvantage to successfully infiltrating the enemy's operation, because then you do not know that good back-up is available; disastrous when you are faced with considerable opposition.

This is a very good games system which is not as expensive as it seems given the full module included.

BORDER CROSSING

This **Espionage** scenario is for up to six players, who must enter East Germany on a spying mission. Depending on how good the agents are (or how good the GM is?) there are four varying options. The content is very detailed, for example the route from the airport to the starting point, and the cloud formation when the agents get there. It is not really a 'combat' scenario, which makes it unsuitable for many players and GMs. Rather the emphasis is on getting to the objective and back without causing trouble. Nevertheless, the detail is impressive.

Nick Davison

***Espionage** (£12.95) and **Border Crossing** (£4.50) are produced by Hero Games, distributed in this country by Flying Buffalo, PO Box 100, Bath St, Walsall, W Midlands.*

MERCENARIES, SPIES & PRIVATE EYES

The title of this RPG is certainly impressive, as is the back cover blurb which states that the rules are suitable for games *'set from the earliest use of gunpowder to the near future with ultra-modern technologies'*. If you take this literally, you are likely to be gravely disappointed. For example, the suggestions for Mercenary actions fill only two sides, the Spy section three sides and the Detective eight sides — although I concede that the rules on combat and weaponry could be used for all three. The designers leave the GM very much on his own — surely the time taken to start from scratch will detract from any scenarios designed, compared with a more rigid games system?

The rules themselves are based on the **Tunnels & Trolls** system, consequently the statistics of the character are entirely random. As the number of skills allowed to a character is based on Intelligence, you are in trouble with a 4! Another aspect of the T&T system I don't like is the impersonal nature of hand-to-hand combat. In a multiple combat, factors are totalled together and the result worked out from that. The possibility of a lucky blow is reduced or removed and fights are invariably one-sided. Incidentally, there are a few pages on using your characters (and their weapons) in a **Tunnels & Trolls** campaign. The designers of the **AD&D™** game tried with an alien spaceship — that failed miserably as well.

I liked the index and rules for poisons and gases. More noteworthy is the fact that the designers of **Espionage** and **MS&PE** are co-operating to include information that enables their scenarios to be convertable to the other system; **Border Crossing** and **Jade Jaguar** both do this. Inevitably this means that the two systems will be compared, and I much prefer **Espionage. MS&PE** is an unsuccessful attempt to graft too many ideas together. Although it is certainly cheaper than other comparable RPGs, it should be noted that no introductory scenario is included with the book.

JADE JAGUAR

In this solo **Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes** scenario, the player has to rescue a Professor and her party from revolutionaries in the South American jungle. It is set in the modern era, as shown by the presence of M-16s and Uzis. The format is the familiar solo pattern, which, although permitting a player to operate without a referee, clearly has its shortcomings. Because the book has to make the running, you can feel it taking over sometimes. In **Jade Jaguar**, for example, a simple choice of going to see someone leads to you ripping a towel away from him on impulse, revealing an incriminating tattoo and leading to your capture, all without further choice.

This is a very shallow module, which cannot be enjoyed for much longer than an hour. **Espionage** players should be warned that they may find the supernatural incompatible with their view of a spies RPG.

Nick Davison

***Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes** (£5.50) and **Jade Jaguar** (£3.95) are produced by the Blade division of Flying Buffalo.*

Distributors' names are given for information only

These games are available from hobby shops

The Little Old Man would appear mysteriously and offer a cryptic piece of advice — giving the DM a chance to do a Henry Crun impression, but doing little to promote character interaction.

A page for the not-so-experienced adventurer

by Roger Musson

It would be wrong to think that in a role-playing game it is only the players that get to role-play, while the Dungeon Master merely provides the setting. The DM, in a good campaign, does even more role-playing than the players; they have one character each, whereas the DM will be running a whole host of characters, sometimes more than one at a time.

I'm referring to what are often known as non-player characters, or NPCs for short. These comprise all the intelligent beings that the players meet in their travels across the fantasy world that the DM creates. And I don't think I'm exaggerating too much if I say that the way the DM plays NPCs will make or break the game. A game where the players never meet anyone interesting, inside or outside the dungeon, will tend to pall no matter how many traps and treasures the DM throws at them. Whereas, with an interesting set-up of NPCs, many memorable adventures may be had without so much as a dungeon.

Once upon a time, in the early days of the D&D® game, before its full potential had been realised, the typical NPC was given another set of initials: the LOM, standing for Little Old Man (occasionally replaced by the LOLITS, or Little Old Lady In Tennis Shoes — or so I'm told). The function of this individual was to emerge mysteriously at some point (typically when the DM was getting bored), offer some cryptic piece of advice, and then disappear equally mysteriously. Apart from giving the DM a chance to do a Henry Crun impersonation for a few minutes, such interludes did not usually offer a lot in terms of character interaction or enhanced credibility. If one were to ask 'who is this guy, and what is he doing alone and unarmed down a dungeon?', answers of a satisfactory nature would not normally be forthcoming.

NPCs ought to be different, interesting and credible. This isn't too difficult to achieve as long as one is prepared to put a little time into thinking things through. In this context I would thoroughly recommend aspiring DMs to commit to heart the article by 'Katino' on **The private lives of NPCs** in #11 of IMAGINE magazine. If one is prepared to work out who an NPC is, and why she or he is there, and provide a genuine motive for their actions, then one gets credible NPCs for starters; if they are credible, then as often as not they become interesting as well — as long as they are different. How can you make them different?

Well, there are broadly two things to think about: the type of NPC and the NPC's personality. The type will determine the actions of the NPC — a hired guard, a lone adventurer, a kidnapped princess, a wandering salesman, will all have different patterns of behaviour and will therefore interact with the players in different ways. Their character will determine more exactly the way in which they act — if they are brave or cowardly, if they are devious, untruthful, big-headed, vain, clever, talkative, etc. If an NPC is one who will only be encountered once, say an orcish guard, it is not too important to provide a deep psychological profile. But important NPCs — those who will appear time and time again — these should be given interesting personalities. If you like, note down in full a character description for reference. Include a few personal foibles — a wizard with a deep-seated lack of self-confidence might be interesting; or a fighter with a guilt complex because he once killed his brother by accident. What you should be looking for are characters with real human attributes, who will seem like real people to the players.

Such characters will be very important in creating a game that will involve players (and the DM) fully — that will really 'come to life'. Indeed, there is something to be said for a DM starting to design a campaign by creating NPCs first and then building the dungeon round them — for instance, at a very simple level, suppose we take the guilty fighter. He might be seeking a lost temple to search for some atonement for his 'crime' and take the players along as travelling companions. Then, if the temple is found, the recovery of an artifact might be required by the temple priests — or the high priest might turn out to be the fighter's brother, not dead after all, but intent on revenge... I hope you get the picture.

The best way to get ideas for NPCs is to read, read, read. And not just fantasy literature; any fiction will do. Any novel with well-defined characters that stick in the mind can be pillaged for interesting NPCs. What about a magician based on Mr Pickwick? In fact, there is no reason why you shouldn't get ideas from television programmes either; but try not to be too obvious. There are probably hundreds of inn-keepers resembling Basil Fawlty already, and if the players encounter a wizard with a floppy hat and a scarf down to the ground and a mechanical dog trailing along behind, they'll know instantly what to expect.

The only difficulty I cannot advise you on is the actual role-playing needed to animate the characters themselves. Not everyone is a natural Laurence Olivier, but then I don't think you need to be. As long as you are prepared to make some effort at playing the part, the imagination of your players will (one hopes) supply the rest. There will come the point, though, where you find yourself with six NPC bandits on your hands, all arguing with one another, and you have to play six parts at once. That's your problem, and you will just have to cope...

Roger Musson

If you are a new subscriber and have found this feature useful, you may wish to read previous ***Stirge Corner*** *articles. Back issues of IMAGINE™ magazine are available for £1 (plus 50p P&P) from: TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD.*

Some SF/Fantasy Book Reviews appear on p45 of this issue.

THE ADVENTURES OF NIC NOVICE

PART THIRTEEN
- THE TREASURE
THE ADVENTURERS ARE VICTORIOUS.... ALL THE KOBOLDS LIE DEAD BUT FOR GROBSEK WHO IS SPARED. WHEN A DAGGER AND SOME COINS ARE FOUND, THE PARTY DECIDE TO SEARCH THE REST OF THE LAIR AND GROBSEK LEADS THEM TO THE CHIEF'S ROOM...
THE CHIEF KOBOLD'S TREASURE CHEST!! SOME SILVER!!..BUT MOSTLY COPPER...
LOOK!! HERE'S A HIDDEN DOOR!!

Participants in fantasy role-playing games play the parts of fearless fighters, devout clerics, spell-casting magic users and cunning thieves in many exciting and unique adventures. The following is an account of a Basic DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game. Sue is the Dungeon Master or referee who has previously prepared the adventure and runs it according to the game's rules. She acts as the eyes and ears of the party, describing what they can see and reasonably expect to know. The players then react to her descriptions as their characters would if they were in the situation described.

The party consists of five characters:
*Nic - **Norva Ironarms** (1st level fighter)*
*Jon - **Brumhold** (1st level fighter)*
*Terry - **Lemmy**, (2nd level thief)*
*Anne - **Jolinda**, (1st level cleric)*
*Alan - **Sarak**, (1st level magic user)*

*After being unwittingly led into a kobold lair, the adventurers were attacked. Sarak used his **sleep** spell on the first wave of kobolds but the chief and his bodyguards arrived on the scene. After a fierce fight the adventurers were victorious, but Brumhold and Jolinda were wounded...*

Lemmy wakes their 'guide' Grobsek with a kick in the ribs. 'Up you get, you double-crossing dog!'

Sue, playing Grobsek, hams up his waking. 'Ugh no! — me want to sleep. No time to get up. No want to skin rats yet. 'Sek sleep some more, have nice dreams.'

Displeased with this response, Lemmy forcibly drags Grobsek out of his magical slumber. The kobold wakes and looks around at the carnage wrought on his tribe by the characters. He shakes with fear and turns pale.

Sarak — 'This is your last chance, Grobsek. Any more lies and you'll join the rest of your family. Is this all your people?—' Grobsek looks around and nods — 'Where do those three tunnels lead to?'

Grobsek — 'To kitchens, barracks and boss' room.'

Brumhold confirms that the chief came out of the tunnel indicated by Grobsek. He and Norva then stand guard: Norva watches the entrance to the lair while Brumhold keeps a wary eye on the tunnels leading from the entrance chamber.

Meanwhile, Lemmy is searching the dead kobolds and muttering in disgust. 'A couple of measly copper pieces each. It can't take much to be a rich kobold.' She stops muttering as she searches the chief. On him she finds a glowing dagger and a purse holding 12 electrum pieces. Alerted by Lemmy's silence, Brumhold turns and sees her attempt to hide the dagger down her boot. He quickly moves over to snatch it. 'What are you hiding, thief?' Lemmy tries to ignore Brumhold, but the others are now interested so she reluctantly shows them the dagger.

Norva — 'Wow! It must be magical! Let's have a closer look.'

Lemmy — 'No! I found it. It's mine.'

Before an argument breaks out between the fighters and the thief, Jolinda steps in. 'Let Lemmy have it for now. We can decide who keeps what, later. I want to search this place and leave. It gives me the creeps!' The others agree and Lemmy happily attaches the dagger to her belt.

After a quick look into the kitchen and the barracks, to make sure there are no kobolds lurking in there, the characters enter the chief's room.

Sue — 'This room is slightly better furnished than the others but it is far from tasteful. Smelly, rotted furs and skins adorn the walls and floors. A crude table, with a few skulls and a pitcher on it, stands in the centre of the room. Over against the far wall is a wooden bed, covered with more dirty furs.'

Norva checks the table over and is disgusted to discover that the skulls have been used as drinking cups. Outraged at this, he sweeps them off the table onto the floor. As Lemmy searches the bed Sarak threatens Grobsek. 'Where's the chief keep his loot? Quick, or you're dead.'

Grobsek, fearing for his life and seeing no chance of escape, plays it safe in the hope that the party will let him go. 'Chief keep it under bed.'

Lemmy, who has looked under the bed, retorts 'He's lying again. The evil mongrel always lies. I should have cut his throat.'

Grobsek — 'No! No! Under bed. Me show you.' He points at the floor. 'There! There!

With Grobsek's aid, Lemmy identifies a loose section of floor. Norva levers it up to reveal a small iron-bound chest. Between them, Norva and Brumhold lift it out and Lemmy inspects it for traps.

Sue knows from her notes that the chest is not trapped, but she still rolls the dice to dupe Terry into thinking that there might be some. She tells Terry that Lemmy cannot find any traps.

Lemmy is a bit uncertain about opening the chest; for all she knows there may well be a trap she failed to discover. Brumhold is not to be stalled. 'Well, what are you waiting for? Get on with it, we haven't got all day.' To save face, Lemmy takes her life in her hands and attempts to pick the lock. Sue rolls again and compares the result with Lemmy's chance to Open Locks. She is successful.

Sue — 'Opening the chest, you see the bright glint of silver coins.'

Lemmy takes out the silver to discover copper pieces underneath. In disgust she throws these on the floor and begins to search the bottom for secret compartments. Sue, knowing there are none, throws the dice and ignoring the result tells Terry that Lemmy doesn't find any.

Jolinda, Sarak and Brumhold fill their sacks with the silver, while Norva begins to pull the skins and furs off the walls.

Sue — 'Pulling off the second skin, you find a wooden door.'

Lemmy darts over and checks it for traps, finds none and decides to risk opening the door. She unlocks it easily and steps back to taunt Brumhold. 'There, it's open. See bonehead, I'm pretty useful in the right circumstances. You would probably have battered it down with your thick skull.'

Norva, the fittest member of the party, pushes the door open.

Sue — 'The smell of excrement and unwashed bodies hits you as you open the door. A short, stocky creature with a long, matted grey beard is chained to the wall. As you enter, its face turns towards you and it looks relieved to see you.'

Jolinda — 'A dwarf! Quick, release him.'

Norva steps over to the dwarf and inspects the chains.

Sue — 'The chains are firmly embedded in the walls, but they are only attached to his wrists by a simple locking mechanism. A bar passed through a hole is all that locks them.'

Norva releases him and Jolinda gives him some food and drink. The dwarf is unwell, having been badly treated by the kobolds, and it is a while before he is able to speak coherently.

Sue — 'My name is Snorri Gerdson. I'm a miner. I was on my way to pick up some supplies when I was jumped by the dog folk. I owe you my life, and in return I shall aid you. During my imprisonment I learnt many things that would interest such goodly folk as yourselves. But first I must return to my people.'

The players decide to journey with Snorri to his home...

Next month - Experience and the END!

Jim Bambra & Paul Ruiz

DISPEL CONFUSION

Role-playing games have complex rules which sometimes cause problems of interpretation to gamers. ***Dispel Confusion*** *is a column intended to help by providing solutions to these problems.*

At present we mainly answer questions about TSR games, and while the answers we arrive at may not be fully official, we do at least have contact with the designers.

An answer column needs questions, so send yours to: ***Dispel Confusion, TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Road, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD.***

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® and ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games

Q. Where does the 'double damage for a 20' rule come from? (*Basic & Advanced*)

A. This rule is generally taken to mean that when the 'to hit' die is rolled and a natural 20 comes up, any subsequent damage done by the attack is a 'critical hit', and does twice as much damage. The rule is widely used, especially when characters attack monsters (monsters rarely get this rule used in their favour). If they did, fewer players would be as keen on the idea — a fire giant who rolled a 20 would do as much as 60 points of damage with one blow!

The idea of 'critical hits' has never been an official part of the game. It is most likely that it has been borrowed and much-simplified from game systems where this rule exists.

Q. What is the 'scale' of spells? **Hold person** has a range of 6", and **fireball** has an area of effect that is a 2" diameter sphere, but what are these in actual distances? (*Advanced*)

A. In general, 1" equals 10 feet when applied to scale distances inside structures (dungeons, castles, inns, etc) and 10 yards when applied to outdoor ranges. However, although a spell range increases by a factor of three outdoors, its area of effect still uses 1" equals 10 feet.

Q. In combat, assuming a magic user is not under attack, how many segments worth of spells can be cast in a melee round? (*Advanced*)

A. The number of segments it takes to cast a spell is irrelevant in this case — a magic user may cast only one spell per melee round. If the spell takes less time than a full melee round the remaining time cannot be used for other activities. Cantrips are an exception to this because of their simple nature and minor effects (see issues 8 and 9 of **IMAGINE**™ magazine for further details).

Q. Would a barbarian be able to use a magical weapon if he failed to detect magic? (*Advanced*)

A. The barbarian (from #2) has the ability to detect magic, but it is probably not a conscious ability. It is more a 'feel' that magic is present. Even if the barbarian doesn't detect the presence of magic immediately, the weapon's unnatural excellence would cause him to be increasingly uneasy. Barbarians may be barbarous, but they are not thick — even they would notice the pretty glow of a magical sword!

Q. How long does it take to drown, to die of thirst or die of hunger? (*Advanced*)

A. As an absolute maximum, a character can survive three melee rounds without air, three days without water and three weeks without food.

Q. Does a **find traps** spell indicate the exact nature of a trap, and thus how to overcome it, or merely indicate that a trap is present? (*Advanced*)

A. **Find traps** reveals the presence of traps both mechanical and magical, but *not* their exact natures. There is a 10% chance per level of the caster that the type of magic involved (divination, alteration, etc) will be revealed, but not what the spell actually is. A **magic mouth** spell would not be found by a **find traps**.

Q. How many people can a medusa petrify in one round? (*Advanced*)

A. The gaze of a medusa (or basilisk for that matter) can only affect one person per round. This is in addition to any other attacks made by the creature, although it may be difficult for it to hit one person while 'gazing' at another!

Q. Does the **protection from evil** spell keep out undead? (*Advanced*)

A. This is a common misinterpretation of the spell. However, the **PHB** quite clearly states that **protection from evil** produces a magical barrier which prevents bodily contact by enchanted or summoned creatures only. So, unless an undead has been conjured from another plane, for example, it would not be held at bay by this spell. Moreover, if any attacks are launched from within the protective circle of the spell, the barrier is immediately negated and cannot be raised against that particular monster again. Of course, the bonuses to the caster's armour class and saving throws will remain effective in all cases.

Mike Brunton, Graeme Morris, Phil Gallagher & Jim Bambra

Letters

An abundant mailbag has accumulated here in the editorial dungeon this month, so we'll add no more introduction than that if you have anything you think other gamers want to hear, write to:
***IMAGINE magazine (letters)**, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD.*

#10 provoked a controversy that, honestly, we hadn't been expecting....

Bryan Betts, Bristol: W H Smiths will never take **IMAGINE** if it keeps printing covers with pictures of enormous phallic symbols!

I suppose it will sound naive if I say that we didn't even notice that we had until people started telling us.

Melvyn Huntley, Poole, Dorset: Congrats on the standard of **IMAGINE**. Great artwork — I want a copy of #9 to frame the cover.

One thing missing is a low level adventure for a small party. I always have trouble DMing more than four people (if you knew my four you'd understand), and I find low level characters much more fun. Every orc is a challenge, rather than just having them flicked away like flies, which tends to happen at higher levels.

I'm on your side.

Graham Morton, Halesowen, West Midlands: I was shocked to see no letter column in #10. Is it true that your readers don't write letters?

In #8's **Dispel Confusion** you said that Fighter/Thieves could not use thieving skills while wearing metal armour. I fail to see where open locks, find/remove traps and hear noise would be void. Hear noise must be the most reasonable to allow armour-clad characters to use.

In #10 you said that NPCs should always be as good as player characters. Does this mean that when the fabled **Companion** set arrives everyone in their modules will be 14th level, and you won't be able to go into a tavern without tripping over a 20th level magic user?

And why should you have to get to high levels before wanting to meddle in politics? Even characters in B4 **The Lost City** can get involved in local politics. Great fun.

When are TSR going to give us some official rules regarding clerical conversion skills? I mean, killing orcs and healing is all well and good, but shouldn't they be trying to spread the faith?

PS Good to see that you intend to publish another Dave Langford story. It's about time he did some proper writing.

*Whatever do you mean? I hope you're not being rude about the poor boy. It's people like you who get us into trouble – I wonder if we can afford to have a letters column if all people are going to do is be rude about authors who are about to have best-selling books published called **Micromania** (Gollancz, £7.95) and **The Leaky Establishment** (F Muller, £8.95?). I wondered how I was going to get that information in....*

Ross Sleight, Chisledon, Wilts: I must congratulate you on the great format of **IMAGINE** magazine, although I would like to see a **Warhammer/ Runequest/Cry Havoc/T&T** scenario once in a while.

Jeremy Dunn, Derby: The cover tells the potential reader that **IMAGINE** is an adventure games magazine, yet a large proportion of the pages are taken up with TSR products, and the **AD&D** game in particular. Fortunately, the editorial in #10 added to the predictions for 1984 by stating that there would be articles on other popular games in the near future.

*And so shall it be. Last month – **T&T**. This month – **Call of Cthulhu**. Next month – **Traveller**. **Runequest** and Super-hero games beyond number to follow within the year. Now, all we need is someone with a working knowledge of the **Pits & Pterodactyls**[10%] game and we're laughing.*

Meanwhile, Victoria Kassner's plea in #11 has produced a remarkable response, of which the following is but part.

Penny Davidson, Reigate, Surrey: As a female, I can't say that I ever had any problems in getting to know other role-players. I placed an ad in the classified page of **WD** and several groups phoned me up. As to conventions: if Victoria won't go because she doesn't know anybody, she'll never get to meet people. If all women felt like that, we'd all be at home doing the washing and ironing.

Andy Blakeman, Highnam, Gloucester: I got into the game by being loaned a copy of it — the person who had bought it couldn't understand it. I got together a few mates, and played a session. We did everything wrong — each controlling four characters in opposition — but I was not perturbed! And I'm still here.

Amanda Kear, Aberdeen: I am fortunate enough not to be 'lone' as Victoria is. After saying that, our university group has 45 members, only 4 of whom are female. We therefore form our own little band. I was introduced to the game by my younger brothers who dragged my pal Philippa and I in to make up the numbers. As 'big sister' and 'big sister's friend', we didn't quite classify as females! They play an extremely juvenile game, and find it odd that members of the Society up here are prepared to play characters of either sex.

Patricia Bond, Stockport, Cheshire: I wrote to you at the end of last year concerning my lonely plight as far as RPGing went. I am a fairly recent player of this type of game, and since I started I haven't met one other person who knows what I'm talking about. So I stopped talking about it. I play in secret. My family pat me on the shoulder and say it's just a phase I'm going through. It's 'not the done thing' for a female to go around pretending she's a mighty warrior.

Although I'd love to go to a convention, I'd be terrified. What's needed is a meeting for novice players, with experienced GMs around to help and advise. But please, does everything have to happen down south?

It seems that if you're confident enough, you can cope with any of the problems that come from doing something 'different', but Penny, Andy and Patricia all agreed that clubs were the best way to meet other people 'going through the phase', and I hope our clubs listing in #12 helps a lot of people realise that there are plenty of other gamers out there somewhere (I certainly hope so.... otherwise I've been talking to myself here for the last year....)

*One of our recent successes was **The Private Lives of NPCs** in #11.*

Andy Blakeman: The best feature in #11 was **The Private Lives of NPCs**. It's a shame that Katino wished to remain anonymous — I'd send him a fan letter! His ideas, although not revolutionary, are a pleasure to read. I do not play in the style of the majority, but I found his suggestions very useful.

Paul Mason, Coventry: The NPC article was OK fare for D&D/T&T freaks, and made some good points within a simple framework.

In the same issue we had the Cavalier, the latest in the long line of universally popular new character classes....

Simon Webster, Sheffield: There is something that has consistently been an annoyance with the AD&D game, the sudden special abilities gained with a rise in level. I fail to see how a Cavalier can gain the ability to ride a pegasus when he reaches 7th level. Surely such a skill requires practical experience.

Stephen Ormerod, Onchan, Isle of Man: May I say that the Cavalier is one of the greatest possibilities for player-character overkill ever! And the Thief-Acrobat doesn't add anything to the system until reaching 20th level — the Barbarian can jump further on his tod!

Tim Ellis, Sutton Coldfield, W. Midlands: The Cavalier is slightly better, but I feel that the alignment is wrong. Cavaliers, like Monks, are dedicated to their orders, and should therefore be Lawful. And the word Chaotic should replace the word Evil throughout. Chaos is far worse, in the eyes of these people, restricted as they are by their chivalric code of behaviour, than Evil.

Jeremy Nuttall, Congleton, Cheshire: The Cavalier just goes to show that to make a new class interest players, you have to make it more powerful. A good thing is that the new classes attempt to bring the game into a campaign setting, which is a good thing. Perhaps you could print the specialization tables for other classes, otherwise Cavaliers are more than just too powerful.

By chance, I rolled up a Cavalier with the barest minima of ability scores, and I intend to introduce him into the local clubs campaign, just as soon as my current stint as DM reaches an end. I quite fancy the idea of having this gallant laddo running around looking for a fair damsel or two to save, and he should fit into the campaign quite well. I do think it's a pity that Gary included some of the ideas he did – surely there cannot be that many campaigns where the idea of chivalry matches medieval Western Europe quite so closely – but I think Jeremy is right that at least an effort has been made to tempt people away from the standard self-interested fighter format. That is what I hope other readers will gain from the class, and I hope that more of you will write in and tell us what you have made of your Barbarian, Acrobat and Cavalier characters once a little more time has passed.

And lastly, this:

Irene Ambrose, Treasurer, Galacticon, Hounslow, Middlesex: I was pleased to note that the Galacticon Convention was mentioned in #10. However, the caption under the photograph was both inaccurate and misleading, as it states that the 'demo' outside the BBC by a small number of **Blake's 7** fans was part of, or the beginning of, Galacticon. The Convention opened on the morning of the day after this 'demo' was staged, and the two events were not connected. I would ask you to print a statement to the effect that the two were not connected.

OK. In fact, we didn't imply that they were, but that certain individuals attending the con made the protest. Still, our apologies for any embarrassment caused. **Paul Cockburn**

Book Review

*Dave Pringle, editor of **Foundation: The Review of Science Fiction**, looks at recent releases in the world of adventure- and science-fiction.*

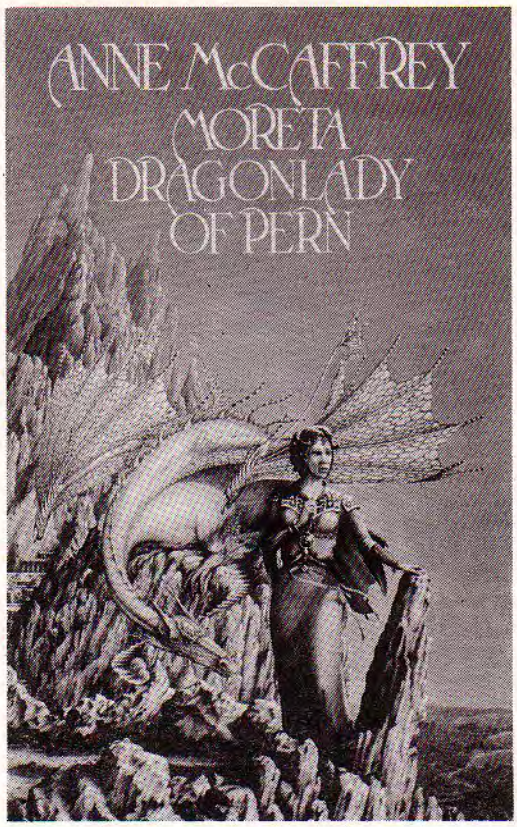
It is tempting to poke fun at the title of Trevor Hoyle's new novel by saying that it represents the last gasp of eco-doom fiction. **The Last Gasp** (Sphere, £2.50) is a commendably well-researched block-buster which takes its large cast of characters through some 35 years of near-future agony. Increasing industrial-ization of the planet leads to oxygen depletion, which in turn causes mass deaths, social upheavals, mutations. Hoyle writes very efficiently, piling on a little too much violence and horror towards the close. There is a 'surprise' happy ending (no surprise at all to longtime SF readers) and the good guys get to live happily ever after. All this is prefaced by a quotation from Charles Dickens' **Hard Times**. If one could carry this fairly conventional bestseller back 130 years in a time machine and give it to Mr Dickens to read, one suspects it would be utterly beyond his comprehension. The world has moved on, and the hard times have changed indeed.

You might take **Keepers of the Secrets** by Philip José Farmer (Sphere, £1.50) for a new novel, but you would be wrong. It is a re-titling of **The Mad Goblin**, first publish-ed as a companion volume to **Lord of the Trees** in 1970. It is a pastiche Doc Savage novella, just as the other was a fake Tarzan tale. Both are in fact sequels to Farmer's out-of-print novel **A Feast Unknown** (1969). The remarkable thing about the two novellas is that they contain no *naughty bits*; they are 'clean' follow-ups to a book that was very dirty indeed. In a 1976 interview Farmer said that the two stories as originally written were full of explicit sexuality — he was forced to remove all that stuff when the intended publisher went out of business. The publishing house that took over the books wanted safe, wholesome entertain-ment. As a result, **Keepers of the Secrets** drips with much blood but nothing else. A pity, in a way. At his best, Farmer has an outrageous imagination, but here it was not permitted to frolic to the full.

J G Ballard's **The Terminal Beach** (Everyman Fiction, £2.95) is perhaps the finest collection of a master short-story writer. What more can I say? — except that it is good to see it reprinted in this quality-paperback format, with an excell-ent cover painting by James Marsh.

Brian Stableford is an underrated writer, although on the evidence of **Balance of Power** (Hamlyn, £1.75) you may not agree. The fifth of a series of six novels about the planetfalls of the 'recontact' ship *Daedalus*, this is a fairly humdrum example of Stableford's work. There is too much jungle-adventure and piracy-on-the-high-seas stuff in this book for it to succeed as SF. However, please do not underestimate Stableford. His earlier works, **The Realms of Tartarus** (1977) and **The Walking Shadow** (1979), are well worth watching out for.

Stableford contributes the most useful list to **The Complete Book of Science Fiction and Fantasy Lists**, edited by Maxim Jakubowski and Malcolm Edwards



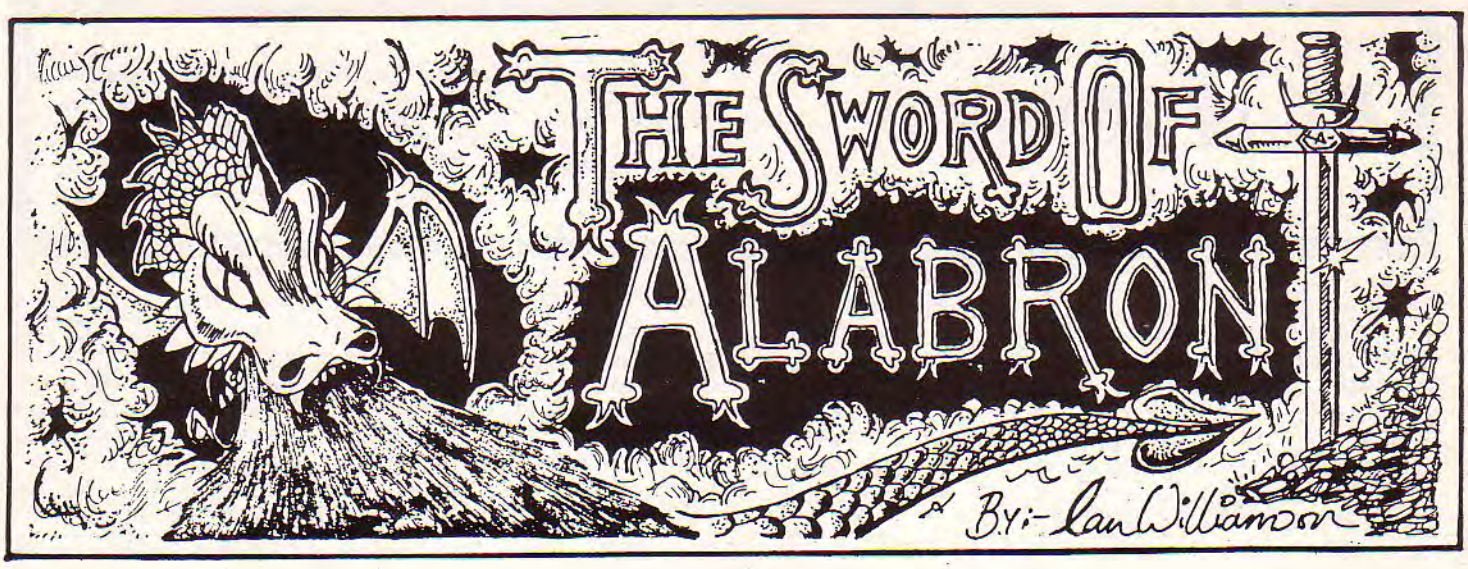
(Granada, £2.95). His list, one of hundreds in the book, is entitled *The Ten Most Unjustly Neglected SF Novels Ever Written*. I discovered to my horror that I had read not one of the the works he cites — an eyeopener indeed. For the rest, this volume is a mixture of the informative, the funny and the merely trivial. In general the most amusing lists are those contributed by guests rather than the ones compiled by the editors themselves: Dave Langford's *Twelve Favourite Clichés* and *Ten Favourite Scientific Errors*, John Sladek's *Seven Great Unexplained Mys-teries* and Nick Lowe's *Ten Characters Who Have Promoted the Consumption of Coffee in Improbable Quarters of Space and Time*.

Anne McCaffrey cheerfully admitted in a recent interview that she is a 'science fiction hack' (**Locus**, February 1984). She is also the richest lady in the field, her books appearing in 'multiple printings and hundreds of thousands of copies' (according to the Jakubowski/Edwards list, **The Science Fiction Plutocracy**). Her latest overpriced paperback — with big print like one of those books for the near-blind one finds in public libraries — is **Moreta: Dragonlady of Pern** (Corgi, £3.95). Those who are hooked on McCaffrey's brand of romanticism will pounce joyfully on this latest tome in the Dragonsaga. Others will shud-der and avert their eyes.

To round off, I must mention a clutch of hardcovers from Brit-ain's leading publisher of SF, Gollancz. John Sladek's **Tik-Tok** (£7.95) may seem over-familiar to anyone who has read his novels about Roderick the Robot. In this case, however, the robotic protagonist is a malfunctioning demon rather than a tin angel. Tik-Tok murders little children, among others, and yet somehow Sladek keeps us laughing. Bob Shaw's **Orbitsville Departure** (£7.95) is an old-fashioned blend of mystery and hard science, a sequel to his excellent **Orbits-ville** (1975). It does not hold up as well as the earlier book, suffering from a rather rushed *denouement* which ought to have boggled the mind but for some reason did not. Neverthe-less Shaw is the most readable of writers and like all his books this one entertains. **The Steps of the Sun** by Walter Tevis (£7.95) is all about the psycho-logical hang-ups of a near-future multi-millionaire who goes planet-hop-ping in search of his lost virility, or something. I found this an irritating book, implausible, overlong, outdated and would-be *risqué*. Vonda N McIntyre's **Superlumina!** (£8.95) is better, though also a bit too long and earnest for my taste. *This* one is about the psychological hang-ups of a young woman who wants to be one of the boys and make it as a faster-than-light starship pilot. She suc-ceeds at the expense of losing her heart, both literally and metaphorically. Romant-ic SF, with a much harder edge than the works of Anne McCaffrey.

David Pringle

Dave informs us that this is the last review page that he will be able to do. We wish him all the best for his future plans. Starting next month, Colin Greenland will take over a combined SF media page.


THE SWORD OF ALABRON
B.Y:- Ian Williamson

A LONE KNIGHT STANDS ABOVE THE PARTY, HE UTTERS THREE WORDS.
"ART THOU BRAVE?"
AY! NONE SHALL COME BRAVER THAN US!

THE REST OF THE PARTY, SAVE AUCHTER AND HIS SLAVE, SEEM MOMENTARILY TO HAVE REMEMBERED SOMETHING THEY MUST HAVE LEFT "BOILING IN THE CAULDRON."
ER... IS IT ALRIGHT IF I BRING MY SHIELD?
IS THAT THE "AXE OF THE DWARVISH LORDS?"
NO, ITS MINE! N'YOO KEEP Y'HANS ORF Y'HEER

WHAT DID I SAY?
PING
PING
COME THEN... MORTAL!

AND...
YOU HAVE TRAVELLED FAR, HERE LIES THE GATEWAY TO THE ANNEXE OF RENDENCLAW SNOWDEMON "WHITE DRAGON OF THE SWORD"
ALL MAY PASS. BE THEY WORTHY THEY SHALL RETURN. FOR IT IS WRITTEN- NONE SHALL RETURN WITHOUT THE MIGHTY SWORD OF ALABRON.
I HAVE NO FEAR. BLACK AUCHTER AND I, SHALL END THIS WORMS DESPICABLE EXISTENCE!
AI! I'LL DO IT
YEAH, THAT SOUNDS REASONABLE.
YET, I SHALL REQUIRE THE SERVICE OF A THIEF.
..AND I, THE HELP OF A MAGIC-USER!
WHY! THERE YOU ALL ARE!... I MUST HAVE... DOZED OFF! (yawn)
DOST THOU SUFFER FROM "SLEEPWALKING?!"
OCCASIONALLY..
THE PARTY DESCEND THE SPIRAL "GATEWAY"...
"KRELLS BRAIN SURGEONS!" 200 years I'VE STOOD HERE, AND THEY MUST BE THE WORST YET!

MAYBE I'LL REASON WITH HIM!
OH SURE! "HI RENDEN CLAW OLD PAL; MIND IF I JUST HAVE THIS SWORD YOU'VE GUARDED FOR THE LAST 200 YEARS?"
NIGHTSWIFT! THERE'S SOMETHING I THINK YOU SHOULD SEE

LIKE A WIND OF PROPHECY, THE HEARTS OF THE PARTY SANK, STRUCK BY THE NUMBING COLD, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE QUEST BEGAN; THE AWESOME REALITY OF THEIR TASK...

HOW TO OVERCOME A REIGN OF SUCH PERSISTENT, ETERNAL EVIL..! IN THAT MOMENT THEY SEARCHED THEIR SOULS, BUT FOUND, IN TRUTH; NO ANSWER.

NEXT CASTLE OF ICE.

The Fantasies Have Just Begun

NOW FROM THE GALAXY OF FANTASY, A NEW GAMES SHOP IS BORN. IT BRINGS A WORLD OF CHOICE TO YOU. ENTER OUR WORLD AND SEARCH THROUGH CHESTS FULL OF FANTASY GAMES AND FIGURES DISCOVER A KNOWLEDGEABLE STAFF TO HELP AND ADVISE YOU. COME INTO A NEW AND EXCITING REALM OF FANTASY. COME TO VISIT GAMES PEOPLE PLAY...

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

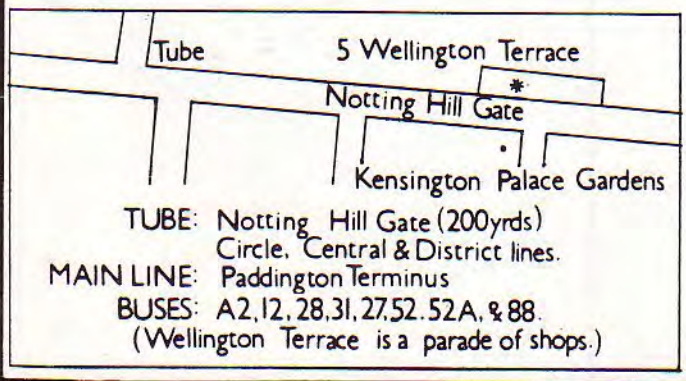
ROLE PLAYING, SCIFI, FANTASY, WARGAMES, MAGAZINES & LITERATURE AND COMPUTERS

MAIL ORDERS WELCOMED

5 Wellington Terrace, Notting Hill Gate
London W2 Tel. 727-9275

OPEN FROM 10a.m. to 6p.m. MON–SAT

VISA



TUBE: Notting Hill Gate (200yrds) Circle, Central & District lines.
MAIN LINE: Paddington Terminus
BUSES: A2, 12, 28, 31, 27, 52, 52A, & 88.
(Wellington Terrace is a parade of shops.)

Now open is a complete games shop... Games People Play. Come in and you'll find a great selection of games.

- A vast range of board conflict and computer games.
- Stocks of figures by Chronicle, Essex, Jacobite, Tabletop, Oracle, Citadel, Skytrex, Heroics and others.
- A large selection of rules, reference books, magazines and accesories.
- All major and most minor role playing systems.

At Games People Play you'll meet a knowledgeable staff to help and advise you. So come to see us. We're the gamers games shop.

Printed by TAVISTOCK PRESS (BEDFORD) LTD., Manton Lane, Bedford MK41 7PG. Telephone: (0234) 58517. ISSN 0264-1399

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the dungeon . . . . .

E. GARY GYGAX'S OFFICIAL AD&D™

MONSTER MANUAL II

An epic TSR™ production in glorious monochrome featuring words on paper from trees!

Based on the original module monsters but including a galaxy of new stars

SOLIFUGID
as 'the creature with lots of legs'

BOGGART
as 'the incredible shifting man'

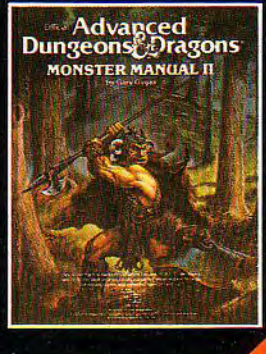
KAMPHULT
as 'the sinewy mugger'

The SIRINE
as HERSELF

And introducing the

BOOKWORM

The producers at TSR wish to thank the Outer Planes of Good, and the Lower Outer Planes of Gehenna for making the crowd scenes such fun.



TSR UK Limited,
The Mill, Rathmore Road,
Cambridge CB1 4AD
Telephone 0223 212517

ON RELEASE NOW AT YOUR LOCAL GAMES SHOP GET IT NOW BEFORE THEY GET YOU!